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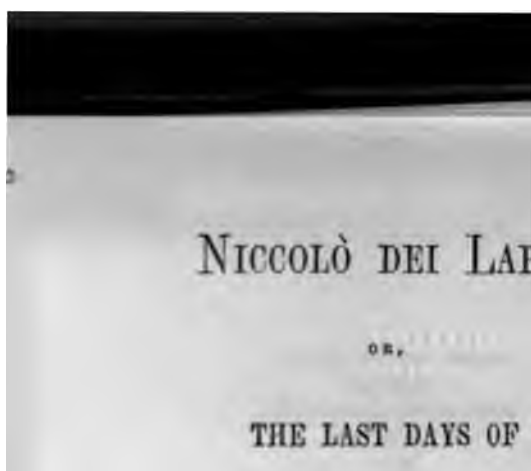
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THE
FLORENTINE REPUBLIC,

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF MASSIMO D'AZEGLIO,

BY H. HALLET.

Videbis Ali mi, quam parva sapientia regitur mundus.

CHAS. OCKENFORD.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT AND CO.

1860.



Ital 232, 3, 4

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TO

TOMMASO GROSSI:

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND:

To your friendship, which is so great a blessing of my life, I dedicate this work, and with what feelings, you well know.

I only regret, that I cannot record the affection which unites us, on a more worthy and enduring monument.

MASSIMO AZEGLIO.

MILAN, MAY 2, 1841.



P R E F A C E .

THIS narration, which I submit to the public, not without the trepidation of self-love in peril, was commenced in 1833, and frequently interrupted, sometimes by severe afflictions, and sometimes by vexations of minor importance.

If it retain traces of these disturbances, if, through my defects, it be far inferior to its theme, I cannot, nevertheless, without ingratitude, doubt the favor, or, at least, the indulgence of the Italians, since I cannot forget, that, with favor apportioned to the theme, they kindly received my first essay.

This second work, which also turns upon a fact not less honorable to the Italian name, promises then equal indulgence to one who, so long as life and strength shall last, desires not to have a thought or a feeling, that is not consecrated to his country.

Although I have attempted to treat of that luminous and terrible epoch for the city of Florence, when the republic defended itself alone, against the arms of Clement VII. and Charles V., I did not intend to confine myself to painting a complete picture of the siege of 1529-30, and the title* itself of this narrative, is sufficient, perhaps, to show, that I

* *Niccolò de' Lapi, or I Palleschi e I Piagnoni.*

have undertaken, not so much to narrate events, as to describe the passions which, at that time, agitated the Florentine people?

The most complete, minute, and regular account of the siege, has been given us by Varchi. A contemporary, an actor also in the scenes of his history, and moved by the passions of the times, who could do better than he? Who would dare revise his work?

Let us, then, leave history to the historians; to Varchi, that of the siege, as, notwithstanding his long and involved periods, and the occasionally obscure irregularity of his construction, his history will always be that, which, above all others, transports the reader most completely into the sixteenth century, as he pours into modern minds, the thoughts, the passions, and the whole life of the times of which he writes.

But if Varchi has spoken well, has he said all? All, that one would gladly know, with regard to those ancient men, who, in their loves, in their hates, in their faith, in their sacrifices, and even in their crimes, showed a natural inflexibility so far removed from modern weakness?

I know not what may be the answer of the reader; mine is in the negative. No, I do not know as much as I would like to know, when I read the honorable achievements of these brave citizens, of their battles, their tumults, their customs; when I see them as magistrates, soldiers, and heads of parties. I admire their virtue, their constancy, their strength; I marvel that human nature has produced individuals of such potent faculties, but I ask in vain of the historian, how these men filled their places of fathers, husbands, sons and brothers; how they appeared, when, after a stormy day, they returned at night to the shelter of the domestic roof, when, having laid aside the equipments of war, and seeking a momentary repose from the cares and labors that pressed upon them from *without, they acquired, in the unrestrained intercourse of the*

family circle, the power to rush into new perils, and encounter new fatigues.

Finding history mute and insufficient, I turned to the chronicles, to the epistolary correspondence, and the ecclesiastical records of the time, the traditions of the people, the monuments. I interrogated the towers, the walls of Florence, the bastions of San Miniato, overgrown with ivy which twines itself equally over the republican stones, cut by the chisel of Michael Angelo, and the Medicean device of the six balls; as the same tomb receives the ashes of a Polinice and an Eteocles. I asked the Palazzo Vecchio, ancient and immovable witness of so many triumphs, and so many scenes of desolation, which has seen rise and fall so many fortunes, which, from the height of its Guelph towers, saw the Duke of Athens overthrown, the Ciompi conquerors, the corpse of Jacopo de' Pazzi, ignominiously dragged through the streets, Fra Girolamo burned at the stake, the Medicean hydra, three times trampled under foot, and again three times rising into life; which survived the republic, and saw it avenged, in the impure and bloody affairs of the race of Cosimo, ignominiously extinguished in the course of two hundred years; an edifice, that still raises its sides, sustaining the high tower of Arnolfo, placed in the deep recess on its front, destined, perhaps, to see as many centuries in the future, as it has already seen in the past.

I visited the palace of the sheriff, where, in times more remote, the priors, or presidents of the republic, occupied the first story, in the halls of which, they assembled in council; I saw those court-yard steps of marble covered with a roof as rough as though they had been the stairway of a peasant,* those massive pavements of the court, in the centre of which,

* These were times of greatness and of simplicity. Merchants who supplied the King of England with twenty millions of gold florins, had scarcely a silver decanter upon their tables, and their wives accompanied by a maid-servant, went every morning to market for the daily provisions.

instead of ornamental statue or fountain, often stood the stocks and the executioner's block, red with the blood of so many citizens, dying sometimes justly, sometimes unjustly, but always manfully; marbles, that resounded under blows that took the lives of Boscoli, Capponi, Bernardo del Nero, Francesco Carducci, last but one of the Gonfalonieri of the republic, and so many others, who all lost their heads in the tremendous game of more than a hundred years' duration, between the house of the Medici, and the people of Florence. I visited the old residences of the citizens; those palaces, or rather, domestic fortresses of blackened jagged stone, all similar to the Palazzo Ferroni, at the bridge of S. Trinita. I traversed the courtyards, the stairways, penetrated everywhere, striving to figure to myself, the customs, the countenances, the forms of speech, the habits of these by-gone inhabitants, as, on seeing an old rusty helmet, and raising the visor, fancy sometimes attempts to paint the noble and daring visage, which once gleamed from beneath. With the aid of fancy then, (and what other guide could I have?) I sought every where, and in every way, the former people of Florence, — that people of so much nerve, so much life, which, after three hundred years of agitations, wars, discords, uproars, and proscriptions, found itself, even in 1530, sufficiently sound and vigorous, to resist alone the power of Charles V., and fell, after a long contest, betrayed, rather than vanquished; a people, that prospered while it appeared to carry in its bosom the germs of destruction, but which became desponding, and lost all spirit, all greatness of soul, after long and stable tranquillity under the Medici; perhaps, because the principle of the old state was, to enkindle patriotism, that of the Medicean, to stifle and extinguish it.

But the footsteps impressed upon the soil of Florence by *its ancient inhabitants*, modern civilization has almost wholly effaced. *The foreigners*, who, courtier-like, descend every

PREFACE.

year upon Italy, to take their pleasure, and vilify their place of sojourn, while luxuriating in its charms, have done much towards eradicating all traces of those early times.

Rendered sad and thoughtful by reflecting on the terrible judgment that weighs upon our nation, I hoped, at least, to find traces of the olden times in some forgotten corner, where the customs, language, and course of traditions might have remained pure, and undisturbed by the

steps of modern innovators I scoured the country, climbed the hills of Pistoja, and my heart and ear were consoled by hearing the poor shepherds and peasants speaking to me in the Florentine language; listening to what they could tell me of Castruccio, of Francesco Ferruccio, of whom they knew nothing from books, but each generation had learned from the preceding one, that the first was a brave man, and that the second died for the salvation of Florence.

I bless the hours, that I passed thus, seated at those humble firesides, lending ear to the rude, but really lofty narrations of these simple men, who know so much of those remote and glorious ages, and so little of the present, as if by an intuitive sense of what is of real value. During these colloquies, I actually forgot the age in which we live; I was transported to those times of the past; I saw before me, living and real, these men so well-known to me through the portraits of the historian, the dramatist and the novelist. I have actually found them, then, I said, delighted; I have found the models I intend to depict. And I set myself to studying them, to sketching with as much accuracy as possible, by the aid of the imagination, and the inductive principle, the interior life, the passions, and the affections of the epoch in which I have chosen to place the actors of my tale.

Of such studies, *partly real, partly imaginative*, this, my *work, is the result, and, imitating the architect, who, to*

demonstrate the internal order of an edifice, represents it in the designs, as if cut through the centre, I wish to depict in the same manner, the interior of the house of a Florentine citizen, during the siege.

This I have endeavored to do, as well as I could. If I have done it ill, let the reader remember, that to do a thing even badly, costs labor and trouble.

M. AZEGLIO.



NICCOLÒ DEI LAPI;

OR,

THE LAST DAYS OF THE REPUBLIC.

CHAPTER I.

THE events which I am about to relate, took place at the time when Florence was besieged by the army of Charles V., who, to carry into effect the treaty concluded with Clement VII., at Barcelona, resolved to force the Florentines to submit to the dominion of the Medici.

But the city of Florence refused to receive the Medici even as private individuals, and prepared to defend themselves, animated by the recollection of these same Medici, so easily driven away in 1527; by the prophecies of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, by the desire of living free, and by the arms and fortresses furnished by the party called the Piagnoni, who were well aware that the emperor and the pope would not be satisfied that the Medici, returning to their country with the other banished Paleschi, should remain there as private citizens; but, that under this modest demand, they proposed to re-instate them in their former authority.

It was a morning at the end of October, in the year 1529, and the dawn appeared unusually tardy, penetrating with difficulty the dense fog that shrouded the city of Florence.

A cold rain, that might almost be called snow, was quietly and steadily falling, and not a living soul was to be seen in the streets, save some soldier or a party of the officials of the night, returning to the Palagio, benumbed with cold, wrapped in their cloaks, the hoods of which were closely drawn around their faces. *The closed doors and windows and the barred*

shutters indicated that the greater part of the citizens were still wrapped in sleep. The churches were opening, one after another, but there was no one to be seen save the menials employed in sweeping them, or the sacristan waiting to prepare the altars. In the church of San Marco, however, of the Dominican fraternity, the bells, which had been tolling a funeral peal for an hour before day, had already summoned together a small number of the faithful. The interior of this church was not then, as now, ornamented by columns of the composite order, and the altars afterwards erected by Gian Bologna, but still remained, simple and serene as it was built by Cosimo the Elder.

Before the great altar, between four huge candlesticks of iron, was placed a bier, on which lay the corpse of a young man, who apparently had not passed his twenty-sixth year; there was a crucifix between his hands, which were joined upon his breast; and the ground, as well as the coffin, was strewn, according to the custom of Florence, with the leaves and flowers of the orange-tree. Beside the pillow that supported his head, two consecrated candles were burning, with which the devout are accustomed to make the sign of the cross over the dead. Although the body was clothed in the Dominican habit, it is not to be supposed that this had been worn in life, but merely that it had been put on after death from pious motives, — an inference confirmed by the sword and the shield, with a red lily on a white field, (the device of the commune of Florence,) which were placed at the feet of the deceased.

Mass not yet having commenced, a single candle only was burning, whose red light illuminating the group of persons who had been the first to arrive, and who were kneeling in prayer around the corpse, fell upon the nearest figures, surrounding them with a rayed halo, (such as Rembrandt often made use of,) lighting more and more faintly the more distant objects, and gradually fading away into the obscurity which reigned at the farther extremity of the church. Above, the darkness was gradually diminishing, as the great windows of the vaulted ceiling were beginning to be discernible by the pale sky-blue tint upon the window-panes, which went on brightening and deepening with the growing dawn.

Men were constantly entering the church, alone, by twos, or threes; who, by the measured step, the clash of the spur upon the pavement, and the darkened glitter of corslet or coat of mail, were evidently soldiers; they came forward, and joining *those* already assembled in the church, rested upon the ground *the pike, bill or arquebus*, for all were furnished with either

one or the other of these weapons, and remained standing in postures of humble devotion.

In a few moments there appeared, accompanied by twenty well armed men, the Gonfalone of the Lion of Gold, of the quarter of S. Giovanni. This was a banner, such as the infantry now use, on which was painted a golden lion on a white field. The man who bore it stopped in the centre of the church, and remained there in the midst of his escort. The crowd gradually increased, pressing around the coffin and the group that remained near it, which appeared to be composed of the nearest relatives of the deceased. Two paces from the coffin stood a venerable old man. He wore the *lucco*; a dress adopted in the Florentine republic by persons of importance. It was a robe of black serge, lined with fur, open in front and at the sides, leaving the arms free, the upper part being gathered and fastened with a buckle around the neck; on his head he had a kind of wadded hood, called the *mazocchio*, a part of the cloth of which it was composed falling like a kind of tassel over the left ear, and called *la foggia*; it was secured to the head by a band, that went down to the ground, was gathered up on the right shoulder, and often went round the neck. The tall form and broad shoulders of this old man, gave him the appearance of great vigor and robustness. On his cheek yet remained the healthful glow of a fine complexion, unimpaired by vice. His long thick beard, and the few hairs that fell from beneath his cap, were of dazzling whiteness; his eyebrows alone had preserved in a measure their original brown, and their frequent muscular contraction gave to his black eyes a very proud and stern expression.

The name of this old man was Niccolò, son of Cione, the son of Lapo of the Lapi, of a popolano family, one of the capitadini,* as he was called by the Florentines, of the silk manufacture; a man who could boast of having attained the age of eighty-nine years, with integrity unimpeached, and an ardent love of his country and the popular cause, for which he had on many occasions risked both life and property. But the thought of priding himself in the course of life he had pursued, never entered his mind, for he supposed it to have been the only possible one.

Among the first and most devoted followers of Fra Girolamo Savonarola while living, he mourned him when dead with the veneration due to a martyr, studiously observing in all his

* A term entirely Florentine, by which they distinguished the heads of the different arts and manufactures.

actions, and at all times, without regard to worldly things, the severe maxims of this priest, which, it must be confessed, led him sometimes to convert the merciful tenets of the gospel into a tyrannical and impracticable law.

Cione, the father of Niccolò, being involved in the conspiracy headed by Rinaldo degli Albizzi, which succeeded in expelling from Florence for the space of one year, Cosimo, called the father of his country, on the return of Cosimo, went, with many other banished citizens, to end his days in exile. Niccolò, born in a town of Puglia, to whose bounds his father was restricted, a witness of the misery of that father's last years, and of his obscure death, surrounded by the toils and privations of the exile, had imbibed (almost fatal necessity) with the very first impressions of childhood, an implacable hatred against the Medici and the Pallescan party. How he reconciled this hatred with the principles of the gospel he professed, may be understood perhaps by those acquainted with the logic of men of party.

After many years, it was his lot to return to Florence. He re-opened the manufactory of his father, where he made great profits, with which he had succored the city in 1494, when, through the invasion of Charles VIII., and the stupidity of Piero de Medici, the state of Florence was in imminent peril. On this occasion, it was manifest how devoted to him were the populace: the workers in silk, and the mechanics of all kinds, for, on the night preceding the day on which Piero Cappioni, in the presence of Charles VIII., tore in pieces the paper containing the terms offered by the French, he had at his post more than six thousand of their number.

This affection of the multitude, arising from the reverence which his virtues inspired, and the conviction of his sincere and constant love of the public good, which he never made a pretext for private emolument, was constantly strengthening, and when the Medici returned in 1512, the fear of public opinion alone was sufficient to save him from persecution. His reputation itself was sufficient to preserve him from the flatteries and seductions with which the Pallescan party never ceased to ply their adversaries; and from the year 1512 to 1527, the year of the last expulsion of the Medici, although he was certainly held in suspicion, he was nevertheless left unmolested, and by the friends of the popular cause was considered one of their heads; one on whom, more than any other, they could place their hopes in case of a favorable opportunity for acquiring their liberty. The friendship which had united him so closely to Fra Girolamo, *his faithful and scrupulous observance of his maxims, and above*

all, the blind faith he lent to his prophecies, kept alive in his favor among the populace that species of worship, which they had felt for the celebrated Dominican. The brothers of S. Marco themselves had him in great veneration; they regarded him as one of themselves, and had almost as much reverence for his words, as they formerly had for Savonarola.

Two years before the time of this tale, when, by the departure of the Cardinal of Cortona, and of Hippolito and Alexander de Medici, the government of Florence fell into the hands of the people, he, with Niccolò Capponi and Filippo Strozzi, was employed to concert measures to save the city from the contending factions, and the different political creeds, by which it was then agitated and divided. He had been one of the rulers of the city, one of the "Ten of Liberty and Peace," but his authority was founded less on his official powers than on the confidence reposed in him by the people. Rumors being whispered of the approaching siege, Niccolò, confiding in the prophecy of Fra Girolamo: "*Florentia flagellabitur, et post flagella renovabitur.*" Florence shall be scourged, and after the scourging shall be renovated, adhered steadfastly to the party which refused all concession to the Medici, and used all his influence to excite the people to the defence of the city.

On the 24th October, 1529, the imperial army made its appearance, commanded by Filibert of Chalons, Prince of Orange, who pitched his camp on the hills to the south of Florence; and Niccolò, during the few days that had passed since the commencement of the siege, had already assisted at the obsequies of one of his sons, slain fighting under the walls of Florence.

Now he was attending the funeral rites of a second, with lofty brow, serene countenance, and mind wholly absorbed in God, to whom he offered, not only the lives of his two sons, whom he regarded as martyrs in a holy cause, but those of the others, and his own, if need be, to secure the safety of his beloved city.

By his wife, Madame Fiore, who had been dead a few years, he had had five sons and two daughters; the three surviving sons stood with him around the bier: two of them wore the corslet, or coat of mail, which at this time the Florentine youth might be said never to take off.

The youngest was called Bindo, a fine tall youth of fourteen, though from his size one might have judged him to have been at least eighteen; but he wore neither corslet nor side arms, like his brothers. *The beautiful symmetry of his limbs, the brown and healthy tint of his complexion, the brilliant,*

black, restless eyes, that had all the fierceness of the father's, tempered by the grace of youth, would have been enhanced in beauty by the sword at the side, and the corslet on the breast; but above all, his noble heart and his admirable zeal for the right, which had distinguished him from infancy, seemed to entitle him now, as well as his brothers, to bear arms for the defence of his country.

Niccolò saw himself reproduced in this son, in gifts of mind as well as person, and, therefore, though unwilling to show or acknowledge it, he loved him with greater tenderness than the rest. This tenderness had prevented him heretofore from yielding to the entreaties of Bindo, who was impatient to take his place in battle with the other young Florentines.

Niccolò had often said to him: "You would be a fine soldier at fourteen years! you are but a boy, Bindo; let your elders take the lead, your time will come quite soon enough." However, to quiet him, he had finally promised that in case any of his brothers fell in battle, he should be allowed to take arms in their place. The time had arrived for the fulfilment of this promise, and Niccolò was not the man to fail of his word.

On the morning of the funeral, spite of his austere nature, he could not help embracing this his favorite son, and, drawing him into his own apartment, said to him: "My Bindo, till now you have been a boy, but since you desire to become a man, be it so, in the name of God. You will now come with us; perhaps it is well that you should soon know how these things are managed. Pray God that He make you a brave man; that He give you His aid as I give you my blessing."

With eyes and voice that betrayed the depth of his emotion, the old man kissed his son, and together they entered the church.

What a degree of internal perturbation, what a throbbing of pulses, more violent than that excited by mere mental emotion, agitated the breast of poor Bindo, when he found himself beside the bier where lay his poor Baccio, whom he had always seen so vigorous, so active, with whom he had played so many years, now pale and motionless, with death on his visage, and at the age of Bindo to die seems a thing so impossible.

He saw just below the capuche, in the middle of Baccio's forehead, a round hole, as large as a crown piece, made by a ball from one of the huge arquebuses used in the sixteenth century. Till now he had talked, and had heard others talk, many a time of deeds of arms, of killed, and wounded, but now he saw under his own eyes the true, the real, the terrible effects, and this was quite another thing.

Scalding tears started from his eyelids, and he felt his heart shaken by emotions quite new to him. He was astonished at himself for a moment, and mentally asked, "Can it be that I am afraid?" We beg the reader not to be ready to answer in the affirmative to the simple interrogative of Bindo, for he would err in so doing. The feeling that he experienced was not fear, it was a mixture of startled surprise, grief, thirst for glory, and indignation, and it is not strange that, at his age, he was unable to analyze it.

Of the other two sons of Niccolò, the eldest, nearly forty years of age, was named Averardo, the other, Vicri.

The two young women, Niccolò's daughters, were kneeling a little apart from the men; the elder was called Laudomia, the younger, Liza.

Meantime the sacristan brother had lighted four candles at the great altar. He approached the bier, holding a long reed with a bit of candle-wick twisted about its extremity, and, having lighted the three candles, finding himself near Niccolò, he said to him in a low voice, pointing to the dead, "He was one of the Lapi, and he has never degenerated in the least. Peace to his soul!" "Amen!" responded the old man, and the sacristan went forward to the vestry.

A moment afterward the mass began. The priest who was celebrating it, was Fra Benedetto, of Faenza, superior of the convent, a venerable old man bending under the weight of years. The lay-brother, in a surplice, who was assisting at the ceremonies, had a face upon which it was impossible to bestow an idle glance, and then turn elsewhere, as is the case with most faces one meets. His physiognomy, indeed his whole bearing, was so singular; there was a something so dissonant, so contradictory in his person and his office, that once having seen him, the eye of the observer was involuntarily attracted towards him, and it was difficult to withdraw it. He appeared about fifty, rather tall and meagre, but athletic and straight as a young man. He had a daring eye, and this expression must be taken literally, for he had but one, and his right cheek was seamed by a long scar; and then, in all his motions, in every act, he had a certain off-hand kind of manner that assorted strangely with the garb he wore. At the same time, it was impossible to accuse him of anything unbecoming, or that savored of irreverence. He had a downcast look and a serious demeanor; he responded at the right time, and in suitable tones, and without ever being at a loss for the right word, as is the case with most priests in serving mass. However, he had not proceeded far, before it might have been easily

perceived that it cost him no slight effort on this occasion to follow the maxim "*Age quod agis.*"

Several vollies had been discharged from the cannon planted by the Imperialists at Giramonte, but this being a thing of daily occurrence, little attention was paid to it. The firing, however, becoming more and more frequent, many of the soldiers who were attending the obsequies of their comrade, began to whisper in each other's ears, turning their eyes towards the door, an involuntary, but certainly useless movement, as it was impossible to find an explanation there of what was taking place at so great a distance. Their remarks were of this sort: "The chimera* begins to whistle early this morning. Ha! they are firing for joy at some new disaster or other that has come upon us." (Here a tremendous volley was heard.) "Hark! Hark! That must be Malatesta's gun.† Hear the shots! What a morning serenade, minus the lute! To-day in arms, to-morrow under the sod; bad luck to him who stays! Oh, what can this mean? There must be some cursed panic!" These and similar words, proceeding from the midst of the crowd at the farther extremity of the church, made a buzzing noise, which, added to the roar of the cannons, greatly distracted the poor lay-brother. He did not dare to turn wholly around, but he no longer remained motionless at the service as before; he seemed almost to stretch his ears to listen, and sometimes threw a hurried glance over his shoulder at the door. Niccolò was displeased to hear such a whispering in church, and, scarcely turning his head towards those who were the cause of it, he said, in a firm and clear, though subdued voice, "One would think we were in the piazza." A stern schoolmaster, who, with angry voice, commands silence in a school of thirty boys, is not more fully and promptly obeyed, than was Niccolò by this multitude of men, who would hardly have yielded so readily to the voice of any other man in Florence. The silence was at once so general and perfect, that the priest who was repeating in a low tone that part of the service which is usually inaudible to the congregation, could be heard from one extremity of the church to the other. But this quiet was to be of short duration. Simultaneously with a stunning report of one of the cannons of the camp, the

* A piece of artillery sent to the camp by the Sanese with that friendly solicitude which the Italians at this time manifested towards each other.

† Large culverin cast by M. Vincento Brigucci. It weighed 18,000 lbs. The breech was in the form of an elephant's head, and the boys had named it *for Malatesta*, the captain of the Florentine army.

glass, the lead, and the woodwork of one of the largest windows, broken into the most minute fragments, fell into the church, striking and rebounding against the picture-frames, the walls, and the various projections, with such a quantity of broken plaster, dust, and cobwebs, that it seemed as if the whole vault was destroyed. Fortunately, the greater part of the rubbish fell upon an altar enclosed by a railing, so that no one was hurt.

It was a custom of these times with the soldiers in camp, when they received their pay when the fête day of the sovereign who paid them occurred, or in fine on any occasion when they wished to manifest their joy, to lower slightly the breech of the cannon planted to storm the bastions, and then discharge them at random over the walls, when the balls, falling into the midst of the city, killed and maimed Heaven knows how many, who had as little to do with the matter as the person who does us the courtesy of holding this book in his hands; and this fine amusement, it is to be understood, they called *merry-making*. The camp of the Prince of Orange was just at this time in one of these outbreaks of good humor, and in this morning's merry-making, one ball struck the church of S. Marco, another, falling in the Piazza S. Giovanni, wounded one of the best soldiers of Capitano Sandrino Monaldi, and in various other parts of the city much injury was done by this cruel pastime. At the mishap which now befel the church, neither the soldiers nor Niccolò, nor his sons appeared in the least moved. The two young women were somewhat alarmed, but seeing the others undisturbed, soon became composed. But the one who showed himself most deficient in courage, and for this his office and his advanced years both furnished him with an ample excuse, was the father, who was saying mass. The sense of fear in him rose above every other consideration, and, to tell the truth, so much destruction and such a crash, coming upon one, so unexpectedly too, must have made considerable impression; he drew down his head between his shoulders, and, covering his face with both hands, he cried out, "My God, have mercy!" and if the stout lay-brother had not supported him, he would have fallen. So far there was little harm done, and, if anything, the lay brother deserved well of his superior. The harm was, that in supporting him and seeing him so frightened by an accident that he himself regarded as so trivial, the poor lay-brother was suddenly seized with such a disposition towards mirth, that all his efforts to conquer it were of no avail, and he burst out into a most sonorous, rude,

and unseemly laugh, and his hands being occupied in sustaining the good old man, who still trembled all over, he could neither turn his head elsewhere, nor place his hand on his mouth, nor assist himself by any of those expedients which are usually resorted to in such cases.

CHAPTER II.

Of course, many of those present had observed the consternation of the friar who was saying mass. Out of the respect they bore him, the greater part were highly displeased that the lay-brother should have dared to laugh at him thus in his very face. They were astonished at his audacity, and concluded he must be some irreverent intruder, some plebeian fellow who had dropped the spade to enter into holy orders. They were mistaken, and, in order that the reader may not be equally surprised at his conduct, we will tell him as briefly as possible, who this man was.

Italians, now-a-days, are well acquainted with the history of their country: therefore, if our reader is an Italian, he will doubtless recollect the famous challenged trial of arms near Barletta, between our countrymen and the French, in which the latter were worsted. In case, however, that our book should fall into the hands of some foreigner, we would beg him to give a look at Giuccardini, Giovio, or Muratori. In their accounts of the year 1503, he will find this affair related, and among the Italian combatants he will see mentioned, a certain Tito da Lodi, surnamed Fanfulla, who, according to Giovio, in particular, was a brave man, though of a disposition singularly capricious.

This person, after Gonsalvo had conquered the entire kingdom of Naples, received, like the other men of the company commanded by Signor Prospero Colonna, his share of the spoils of the vanquished, which he speedily converted into two hundred ducats of gold. The last day of the first month that he spent in Naples after receiving this sum, he was forced to part with the last of his ducats, which went to keep company with the other one hundred and ninety-nine, in the pockets of those who played at lansquenet, with better luck, or greater knavery than he.

True, he had a good horse, and an excellent suit of armor, which he might have pledged or sold, and so have kept on a *little longer*, but he had *sense* enough to know, that if he did

that, he would be in the situation of the blind man who sells the violin by which he earns his bread.

He resigned himself to his fate, comforting himself by saying, "Now I have made myself so well known, I can earn my bread anywhere."

The fact was, that Signor Prospero had no wish to retain him in his company, on account of some dispute he had had with his comrades, in which, being in the wrong, he had undertaken to make good his own cause by dint of blows. Notwithstanding this, however, when he found himself pushed to extremity, he went to seek his captain at the Palazzo Graviná, in the Piazza where now plays the fountain of Montoliveto, without being at all discomposed by the thought that he must pass through an ante-chamber, filled with his adversaries.

Being admitted to the presence of his captain, he stated to him that he had merely come to ask of him a certificate in writing, of his conduct in the encounter at Barletta; and then, that he would, in courtesy, direct him to the nearest place in which he had best try his fortune. Prospero, who really wished him well, knowing him to be a bold dare-devil, such as is not often to be met, drew up for him a paper, in which he praised his soldiership highly, and despatched him to the camp at Rome, where he united himself with the Colonnese party, during the agitations which ensued at the death of Alexander VI., and which disturbed the brief pontificate of Pius III. and the beginning of that of Julius II. He followed this proud pontiff in his Roman campaigns, and then, not to be too tedious, he went on changing masters, as was his custom, till 1527; and in this interval, there was no battle, of any importance, in which he was not an actor. He had left one eye at Ravenna, two fingers of the left hand at Marignano, was himself left for dead at the battle of Pavia, and although, after so many mishaps, he limped slightly in his gait, and suffered from his old wounds in the changes of the weather; although his whiskers, once so black, were now hoary; we find him nevertheless, on the morning of the 6th of May, 1527, (a fact we would gladly conceal if possible,) at the foot of the walls of Rome, holding upright with both hands a long ladder, in the midst of a mob of the most unbridled wretches that ever bore the name of soldiers, who, led on by the Duke of Bourbon, were storming the walls of the capital of the Christian world.

The ladder of Fanfulla which, as we said before, was placed against one of the battlements, was full from bottom to

top of as many of these satans as it had rounds. On the highest round was Fanfulla, whom his comrades saw in a moment forced between the battlements, and then disappear in the smoke of the arquebusades; attempting to follow him, they were repulsed, and were not able to surmount the walls until some time afterwards.

Fertile as the human brain may be in imagining deeds the strangest, the most shameful, the most atrocious, whence to form a whole, representing the sack of Rome, on this occasion, it is utterly unequal to conceive the horrors, the memory of which has been transmitted to us by the historians of the time.

One day passed, then another, and another, and a whispering arose among the soldiers, "Where is Fanfulla? What has become of Fanfulla?" Those who understand the reckless nature of the soldier, will not find it difficult to believe that, spite of the solicitude with which these inquiries were made, to miss Fanfulla, to ask after him, to believe him dead and buried, and to forget him, all happened in the course of a quarter of an hour.

But Fanfulla was not dead. He had quietly and contentedly taken up his quarters in the cellar of a canon of Santa Maria in Trastevere, where he had shut himself up, dragging with him the master of the house and the maid servant to point out to him the best cask of wine. Reposing here quite at his ease, and making himself entirely at home in the house of the good prelate, he did not emerge from these comfortable quarters for three days.

But the poor canon, either from the terror he experienced at finding himself in the power of a man of this stamp, who at every moment seemed to him to be ready to strike off his head with a sweep of his frightful great sword, or from the hard treatment he suffered, as Fanfulla, drunk from one meal to the next, insisted upon teaching him to fence, and when he did not satisfy the requirements of his teacher, showered down blows upon him without mercy, — the fact was, the old man fell sick, and in a few days breathed his last.

We shall soon be able to speak well of our Lodigiano; but first, we shall be constrained to relate one of his last excesses which only proves too true the vulgar Italian proverb, "*La più dura a rodere, è sempre la coda.*"

Emerging at length, half-bewildered and stupefied, from the cellar of the poor canon, he found the city conquered and completely subdued, and the churches, the palaces, the houses, the unfortunate citizens and all their property in the hands of the — *I will not say army, as that term implies leaders who*

command, and soldiers who obey, — but of a horde of assassins, without law, without faith, without discretion, and without mercy.

Clement VII., from the heights of the castle of S. Angelo, where he was shut up, could descry the incendiary fires stealing through the city, and hear the howlings, the moanings, and the weepings of those who were subjected to torture to induce them to disclose concealed treasures, and the mad shouts, the savage laughter, the wild revellings of the victors.

All through the streets of Rome was seen, here a house burning, there another, reduced by the flames to a blackened and shapeless skeleton; from the tops of the still remaining walls, the smoking beams, displaced by the action of the fire, tottered, and seemed just ready to fall. Under heaps of rubbish, plaster, boards, and broken and scorched household goods, lay crushed corpses, many of which had lost all human semblance, arms, hands, feet and heads projecting from the mass, all drenched and dropping with blood, forming an appalling and ghastly spectacle. Farther on, with a sudden crash, down fell from its hinges the great door of a palace, crowds of depredators forcing themselves with loud shouts into its interior. In a moment, from cellar to attic, it became filled with thieves; from the forced windows, thrown at random, there rained down upon those who awaited the booty in the street, trunks, chairs, tables, pictures, vases, bronzes, silken coverlets, and furniture of every kind; one was seen hurt and another crippled by some moveable thrown unexpectedly upon him; some, contending among themselves for the same prize, fought madly, while anon, a new crowd succeeding, snatched the prey and made off with it. Silks, vestments of rich texture, lodged upon the projecting window frames, and the iron railings, left there neglected through the abundance of the spoils, or brought down on the points of pikes and partizans. From time to time, a louder general shout burst forth, all faces were turned, every mouth was opened, "Where is it? What is it? Look there, there, up there!" All looked in the direction indicated. At a window, stood or knelt, or was hanging half out, some feeble old woman, or pale matron, abandoned like a worthless shred, entreating for mercy, or uttering frantic shrieks of terror. The crowd cried, "Let us have her! — down with her! — down with her!" — thereupon a rude rush and the pitiable object came to the ground, amid shouts and huzzas, and lay crushed on the pavement, or was caught mid air on the points of the persecutors' weapons. *When all was ransacked, the mansion was fired, so that in case*

the owners had concealed themselves, they would be forced to leave their hiding places. Immense numbers were discovered in their various places of concealment without resorting to this method of bringing them to light. They were found in the chimneys, the cellars, the drains, the privies, and laden with blows, were dragged into the light of day, stupefied and terror-stricken at the aspect of faces inflamed with savage fury, with drunkenness, with the horrible joy of freedom to commit the vilest excesses; at the sight of daggers glistening before them at every step, at the sight of the cords, the red hot irons prepared for torture, of the maidens outraged and then derided, the women who, when old or ugly, were tumbled headlong down the stairways, and the youths reduced to such ignominy that their parents mourned to see them living. In the churches the images of the saints were flung down and broken, the pictures and altar-coverings were torn and bedaubed, the sacred vessels were broken to pieces, to be divided among the spoilers; and, finally, when everything was destroyed, and nothing remained in its original state, the churches themselves were turned into barracks, which the soldiers shared with their mules and horses, to whom the altars served for mangers. In one corner the benches and confessionals, which had been broken up for fuel, were burning under pots and spits full of meat; in another revelled night and day at open table, soldiers and drunken courtezans, wrapped in priestly garments; in their midst were nuns, matrons, and honorable maidens whom fear, blows, and ill treatment had deprived of reason, unconscious now where they were or what they did, completely in the power of these remorseless wretches who almost deafened them with their horrid oaths, rude jests, and obscene songs.

Among other churches, that of San Giovanni de' Fiorentini was exactly in the condition we have just described, a barrack, a stable, a brothel, when, in the dusk of the evening, Fanfulla entered it, having just emerged from his subterranean lodgings. He wore only his cuirass. His helmet, armlets, leg pieces and thigh armor were bound together by their fastenings in a bundle and hung at his back, pendent upon the sword which he carried on his shoulder, supporting it with the left hand. On his head was the cap of the canon, from beneath which gleamed his frightful face, with an expression of sleepy joviality, from the excess of wine he had been drinking. He stopped on the threshold, whistling and gazing at the strange confusion within. Doors, shutters, and boards laid upon barrels, formed a table the whole length of the nave of the church: the table lacked a cloth, but this poverty was

amply compensated by the abundance of the other paraphernalia of the table, consisting of chalices, pyxes, plates, and vases of silver elaborately wrought after the models of Benvenuto Cellini, decanters and drinking cups that had graced the tables of cardinals and prelates, now glittering in the rough and embrowned hands of the soldiery.

The great candlesticks of the altars served to illuminate these orgies, but not being sufficiently numerous, between the crevices of the board were stuck here and there bits of torches and candles of all lengths, many of which broken and overturned, their lighted ends coming in contact with the table, were slowly consuming it, all unheeded by these drunken revellers.

At one end of the board, a pitcher filled with oil, with one of the altar-cloths twisted up by way of wick, was used for a lamp; at the other, a half barrel, with the head broken in, and in this a mass of perhaps fifty candles, the flames of which mutually attracted, were united into one enormous blaze. At different parts of the table were seated, on the church benches, some busily eating without observing what went on around them, others sleeping with arms crossed upon the table, and heads resting upon them. Groups of four and six were seen playing at dice, lansquenet* or gernimi. Now and then, without any *apparent* cause, there would be a clamor, an uprising, a seizing each other by the hair of the head, a clashing of daggers, then a falling of the dead or wounded under the table, among those already there who were buried in wine or sleep, and the survivors would then go on with the game as though nothing had happened. One huge wretch, stretched at full length, flat on his face, upon the same table, with garments all stained with the wine that was running from the vessels he had overturned, and boots covered with mud lying on plates of silver, was snoring loudly, utterly unconscious of the commotion around him. The vilest courtesans were going about in this scene of disorder, as vermin swarm in putrid water, running hither and thither with inflamed eyes and red faces, some loosely dressed, others half naked, receiving caresses, blows and knocks, without appearing to mind either the one or the other.

A soldier astride an empty cask, was playing the fife, whose shrill screams made themselves heard spite of the voices, the shouts, the songs, and the general uproar; another, with a mule's bridle full of bells, was beating time upon the cask

* Cards called *terrestrial triumphs*.

which served as the fife's seat; a third was knocking with a censor upon an overturned kettle, and this diabolical music served to incite those to dancing who could yet stand upright.

Fanfulla stopped a moment on the threshold, sickened with the smell of wine, of fried meats, and the stench which exhaled from within, then advanced and divested himself of the load at his back, flinging it upon the table without regard to the dishes, breaking whatever it happened to fall upon. The loud crash made by the falling armor and the breakage of plates and drinking cups, caused one of the sitters at table to turn round, who, seeing Fanfulla, and recognizing him, cried out, "Oh! Fanfulla!" and then another, and another, and another, then all began to shout, clapping their hands or pounding with their fists upon the table. "Fanfulla has come back! — The one-eyed is raised from the dead!" — "Long live the one-eyed dog!" — "We believed you in hell three days ago!" — "Where have you been, you ugly anti-Christ?" — "Come here! drink! Here, wine, meat, capons for Fanfulla, who is come back again! Death to him who does not bid him welcome!" — "Long live Fanfulla! — Long live the one-eyed!"

And this last huzza was such a burst of united voices that it drowned the shrill tones of the fife, and prevailed above the noisy time-beater with the bridle, and the drummer with the censor and kettle, stopped short the dancers in their mad capers, and awaked the snorer extended upon the table, who, lifting up an ugly, bewildered face, disguised with sleep, looked angrily about him, muttering, "I wish your throats were all cut!" and letting fall his head upon his arms again, recommenced his snoring. He who was receiving from the company these flattering marks of benevolence let not the reader look too critically at our mode of expression, for our meaning may easily be understood by what we have said previously, namely, our Fanfulla, remained standing, grinning with complacency at finding himself so high in the esteem and affection of these fellows.

A slatternly cook brought the viands called for, but Fanfulla, with a stroke of his hand, sent into the air the plates and their contents. "Something to eat! do you think I am starving?" The woman retreated terrified, and he, taking the canon's cap from his head, planted it on that of the man at the table nearest him, saying, "Give me something to drink!"

"You must tell us first where you have been these three days."

"I've been with thirty thousand pair of devils: may they take you, many as you are! Give me something to drink."

But not to weary the reader with this kind of jargon, we will add that, after having drunk, though he had evidently had

quite enough wine previously, he related as well as he could in gross language, and with indistinct articulation his adventure at the canon's. At the end of every period, however, he drank off a cup of wine; and his periods, contrary to the practice of the Cinquecentisti, were brief, and they were many.

In a few moments there appeared, dragged into the church by about twenty brutal wretches, a poor unfortunate old man, whom they had disinterred, so to say, from the depths of a cellar in which he had concealed himself. He seemed about sixty, — trembling, bent, denuded of all clothing save his shirt, which, reaching only to his knees, exposed to view the fleshless limbs, the protuberant joints, the swollen ankles, all indications of his advanced age. One red shoe, torn and falling off, was the sole remains of the dignity of his station. This man, so ignominiously treated, was a cardinal, charitable and humble; in fine, a holy man.

When he found himself discovered, he abandoned to the soldiers the little he had been able to save, having concealed it in all haste when the rumor spread through Rome that the walls were carried. The amount was trifling, because he had always given largely to the poor; but the soldiers, not crediting the possibility that a cardinal could be poor, believed that he did not choose to disclose the whereabouts of the principal part of his property, and that avarice in him was stronger than love of life. They tried at first to frighten him; from words they passed to blows, they tore the clothes from his back, they pounded him with the hilts of their swords and daggers, and finding everything useless, they forced him into the church of San Giovanni de' Fiorentini, to try what effect torture would have upon him.

The uproar increased, if possible, on the arrival of these new comers, who stopped in front of the cask on which was seated the man of the life. He assumed the part of judge, and began to interrogate the poor old man, who, looking about him, and seeing the horrible desecration of holy things, forgot his own peril, and covering his face with both hands, burst into tears.

But words were of short duration: deeds were to take their place. Already a Lutheran soldier, one of those who had descended upon Italy under George von Frundsberg, had brought a red-hot iron, and was about to commence the torture, when he felt his right wrist seized by a hand as if in a vice; he was forced to stop, and the iron fell at his feet. *That hand was Fanfulla's.*

Intoxication had for him two periods: in the first, he was

gay, jovial and excitable, full of laughter and fun, so long as the wine was not too plenty; but if he continued to drink after this stage, he grew pensive and melancholy, tender and most disagreeably affectionate, for he embraced and kissed everybody within his reach. Fortunately for the aged prisoner, he was at this critical moment precisely in this last state. He pushed the soldier away with violence, and cried out, "You are not going to deal so with honest men! — you're not going to scar the flesh of Christians in this way! — vile race of renegade dogs! — yes, dogs! — dogs! — thousand times dogs! — Do you think I am afraid because there are so many of you? I was alive ten years before you were born." (We would inform the reader that orthography fails us to express the strange transformations which the words underwent as pronounced by the tongue-tied Fanfulla; however, his imagination must make up the deficiency.) "See! how they have abused him! and they are not ashamed of it a bit, the thieves! Poor old man! But don't be afraid (and here he threw himself upon the old man, kissing and hugging him with all his might.) Don't be afraid; your dear Fanfulla is here. You shall see how I'll manage them. They are very bad people, without any religion. Lutherans! — heretics — there's no bound to their wickedness! What can you hope from them?"

"And do you hope, you arrant jackass," cried one of these madcaps, "to get money from a cardinal without the cord and fire?"

"I swear to you by the office of bishop, which I hold," said the cardinal, extending his thin, trembling hands towards his persecutors, "I have nothing more, — neither gold nor silver, — nothing, — nothing, — you have taken all!"

"Tell that to this pair of boots," said one of his conductors, throwing down a bundle which, opening in falling, disclosed some holy vessels, a drinking cup, with its basin of silver, two breviaries, and some other trifles of little value. "Look at the treasure here," he continued, "and he has no other, — he, the cardinal! Look and see if this child has cut all its teeth! Bring the iron here, I'll make the courage fry out of him, — out of his body, his blood!"

Fanfulla here again interposed, and prevented the execution of this threat. "Listen, uncle cardinal," he said, "I begin to smell blood. What can you expect? They are boors, — low people. They've no manners. Words are of no use. They want ducats, florins, or they'll make you dance for it, — *moribus est in your shirt*. To kill a Christian, is no more

with them than to brush a fly from the face. Without the cash down, — without the *mammona iniquitatis*, as you priests say, they'll truss you upon a spit like a partridge. Courage! spirit! come, make ready! one word is soon said. Here, in your Fanfulla's ear, where are the dead buried?"

"But I have already told you I have no treasure," said the old man; "God, who sees us, knows it. I am a poor priest; do you think, at this extremity, I should hesitate about a paltry bag of florins?"

Fanfulla writhed, shook his head, (chewing the while) plucking first at one whisker, then at the other. "I'll believe it in my way, and you shall say it in yours," and stooping down to the ear of the cardinal, with one hand on his shoulder, which he grasped more and more tightly as he went on, he said, "Do you understand that it concerns your skin? How is it to be said? In German? Well, go on playing the Indian, and you'll find out. You need not give the whole," lowering his voice so that the others might not hear, "a thousand or so of crowns, of sequins. It will be better. Great affair! They are drunken sots, from first to last. See what a herd of swine! I am alone, and among so many for one to take the whole responsibility, is not enough. Don't suffer yourself to be ill-used, my blessed priest!"

The dialogue went on in this fashion a little while longer, and then ended, as such things must. The old man protested that he had nothing more, and it was the truth. The soldiers were more and more convinced that he had; and the consequence of this belief was, that they resolved to force him by tortures, to disclose the place where he had hidden his treasures. The benevolent intentions of Fanfulla became powerless against the force of numbers. When he found the cause of his client quite desperate, he sprung again into the midst of the throng, and, making them give way, shouted like one possessed."

"Silence! lads, — stop! all of you, and hear if this suits you: let's put him in a coffin, and make a funeral procession for him with candles, through Rome. Who knows but that finding himself at such extremity, and preferring to stay above ground a little while longer, he may have done with this folly?"

A burst of discordant voices was now heard, as all together approved, ridiculed or rejected the proposition. At last the majority, hoping to find amusement in this masquerade, and seduced by the extravagance of the idea, decided that the *thing should be done*. A great bustle ensued; the candles,

the coffin, the black garments, the cloaks of the fraternity were sought out by this mad crew, and in a few moments they issued from the church, bearing the poor old man extended on a bier. There was one soldier with a churchman's cape, turned wrong side outwards; another in a surplice, tucked up behind by the sword beneath, till it hung a half-yard from the ground; Fanfulla with a broom, which he dipped in a pail full of wine, besprinkling every one he met, preceded the body. There were faces in this lawless throng such as may God preserve us from ever seeing; and in their midst were women of diabolical aspect, worse in conduct even than the men. They struck up a long chant, rather howled than sung, in burlesque imitation of that of the priests. Some laughed, some roared, some made foolish doggerel rhymes, some whistled, some blew in empty bottles, some knocked together pot-hooks and frying-pans, some sang obscene songs, all at the same time making a most horrible discord, nowise softened by voices rendered hoarse by incessant drinking and shouting, in a mixed medley of German, Italian, Spanish, and other tongues, for this rabble was composed of all nations and races of men.

For many hours the mob thus perambulated the streets of Rome, and late in the night they returned to S. Giovanni. Setting down the bier, they said to the cardinal, "Up, Messere, and we'll talk the matter over again." But he was already beyond their power. The old man, unable to endure such rough handling, had expired while in the street.

Some days after this, Fanfulla, in passing near the great gate of S. Spirito, to relieve guard, was wounded in the head by certain fragments of the adjacent walls, detached by the artillery of Castello. He was brought to the verge of the grave, and with great difficulty restored to health, not, however, until long after the army, with the consent of Pope Clement, had withdrawn from Rome, laden with its spoils. The care which a poor priest took of him, was as beneficial to the soul as to the body of honest Fanfulla, and, finally, we are able to present him to our reader, a new man, quite different from what he had been, which is equivalent to calling him a good man. He perceived that he was a great sinner, and that he must think of doing a little penance in this world, so that he need not have it all to do in the next. For this purpose he hesitated between two alternatives: to turn priest or to take him a wife, (let not this give offence to our lady readers, since Fanfulla, though reformed, was still Fanfulla; and at last he decided upon the former measure.

He left Rome one morning in full armor, mounted on his

good steed, carrying a chaplet tied to the hilt of his sword, and a scourge hanging from the handle of his dagger, — implements which he now used every night at his lodgings. Through Virturbo, Radicofani and Siena, he finally arrived at Florence. Without getting off his horse, he proceeded to the entrance of the convent of S. Marco, and knocked at the door with the butt of his lance.

The porter came out and asked what he wanted. "I want you to show me the stall where I may put my horse, for I am going to turn friar." At first, the porter thought he was either mad or drunk. Even after many questionings and a deluge of *but's* and *how's* and *whys*, he was with difficulty induced to let him enter and present himself to the superior, Fra Benedetto, of Faenza, who, on hearing the request of the strange candidate, and eyeing his dress, his air, and the savage expression of his face, was unable to determine whether he were in jest or earnest. Without giving him a direct answer, he took time to consider the matter, and in the course of a few days, having had opportunity to ascertain the qualifications of the postulant, he dismissed the doubts that still remained on his mind, and decided to receive him as lay-brother. Fanfulla laid aside his armor, and assumed the Dominican habit, and the name of Fra Giorgio da Lodi. In a few days he had learned enough of his new profession to be able to make a tolerable figure in the choir and refectory; and his horse, whose teeth were getting long, and his eyes sunken, learned also to draw the plough and carry sacks to the mill. At the point of time in which we find his ancient master serving mass, it was about two years, since both had exchanged the life of the field for that of the cloister, each content in his new condition, with this difference, that the horse probably indulged little in reminiscences of the times when he used to rush to the charge, while, on the contrary, these scenes of former days were sometimes but too vividly present in the mind of the cavalier.

CHAPTER III.

THE mass for the repose of the dead, ended without further disturbance. The priest who performed it, took off the *pianeta*,* assumed the *piciale*† to perform the last rites over the corpse, and descended from the altar, preceded by three priests, one bearing the cross, the other two, the candles. Fra Giorgio followed with the vase of holy water. The crowd drew back from the bier, around which remained only Niccolò and his children. The prayers were repeated, and the prescribed ceremonies concluded. When the priests had retired to the vestry, Niccolò signed to Bindo to approach, and then detaching the sword and shield of Baccio, he held them in his left hand, while laying the right on the head of his son, he said, "Bindo, this sword and this shield which I give to you, were Baccio's, who has died in the performance of the duty of a good citizen. Now look in my eyes. Think you that I weep?" The boy, surprised, shook his head negatively.

"And if I weep not, know that it was not from the little love I bore to this my dearly beloved son, and your brother, but because, believing that every man is under obligations, first to our Lord God and his holy religion, and secondly to his country, and that to them he ought to dedicate his life and his utmost powers, and being assured, that to those who do so, will be awarded an honorable remembrance in this world, and an eternal reward in the world to come, I esteem his death most beautiful and most enviable. If I should weep, then, because he, leaving us amid the miseries of this life, has gone to enjoy the infinite delights of the other, I should show myself ungrateful to Divine goodness, and envious of the rich guerdon which his virtues have purchased. Now take these arms in God's name, show yourself such as Baccio; with these in hand strive faithfully,

* The *pianeta* is the garment which the priest wears under the other sacerdotal vestments. It signifies the vestment of purple which was put upon Jesus Christ as king.

† *Piciale*, the sacerdotal mantle.

conquer or die, as you fear the malediction of a father, the wrath of God, and the reproach of men. Keep ever before your eyes, the remembrance of the calmness with which you have seen me stand by the bier of a son slain in a virtuous cause, and be assured that I could — Heaven willing it to be so — see you in his place with the same composure. God would give me strength to do it — but know also," (here he raised with a stern and terrible expression, the hand, which, until now, had rested on the head of Bindo,) "that if you — which God avert — should ever show yourself — but no, I will not foul my mouth with the words, nor imagine such unworthiness in one of my blood. Enough! you have understood me. If, under such circumstances, you could still cling to life, let these eyes never behold you more!"

At the conclusion of these words, which, uttered by a man of so much authority, and upon an occasion, and in a manner so solemn, could not fail to produce a deep impression upon Bindo, and upon all who were present, he attempted to gird the sword upon this, his youngest, his dearest son. The boy raised his arms, to facilitate his doing so, but the girdle which had fitted the manly form of his brother, was much too large for the strippling. "You're too slight, my poor Bindo," said Niccolò; then moving the buckle two or three points backwards, he added, "now all is right!"

But he thought at the same time on the hard necessity which constrained a youth so tender to expose himself to such perils; he thought too of the ruin which was impending over Florence, and of those who were the cause of it. His face darkened, and he could not restrain a sigh, as he tightened the sword-belt around the waist of the child-soldier. This done, he turned to Messer Giovanni Gondi, captain of the "Lion of Gold," who was standing near his standard, covered mid-thigh with a most beautiful shirt of mail. "Messer Giovanni," said he in a firm voice, and with a composed countenance, "if I have lost a son, you have not lost a soldier. I present you this son in the place of Baccio, and I trust in God, he will not show himself inferior to him. "And you," (turning to the soldiers,) "brave citizens! disdain not to receive him as a comrade because of his youth. David was but a lad when he slew Goliath."

The whisperings, and broken phrases that proceeded from the soldiers, betokened admiration and respect for Niccolò, and esteem and affection for the young man. "He's of a race that never degenerates. This noble old man is true steel! Not a tear escapes him! And the son, I can tell you, he is not to be scoffed at. Give him a couple of years' time — a couple of

year's time? Bah! Go to the tower in Mercato Nuovo, where the son of Grechetto teaches fencing—go there in the morning, and you'll see how he handles sword and poignard. And day before yesterday he tried his strength with Morticino, and you know what a young devil *he* is! Well, he threshed him soundly, and there was no debate about it, I can assure you."

A soldier now advanced with the book, in which were inscribed the names of the men who served under this banner. He opened it, and held it before Gondi, who wrote a few lines in it, and then presented it to Niccolò, who read aloud the following words: "October, 1529:—Bindo, son of Messer Niccolò, son of Messer Cioni de Lapi, of the quarter of San Giovanni." "Right! hear me, Bindo!" cried Niccolò, "henceforth, this man," pointing to the captain, "is your father; this," pointing to the banner, "is your house; these," pointing to the soldiers, "are your brethren; now kneel!" Bindo obeyed, and the father laying his hands upon his head, and raising his eyes to heaven, said, in a loud voice, "Bindo, I give you my blessing."

The reader is now sufficiently acquainted with the actors in this scene, to form some idea of the various emotions experienced by them at such a moment. For some time no one spoke, no one stirred, only Bindo, rising, circled with his right arm (the left was impeded by the shield) the noble form of his father, leaned his forehead on his father's breast, and remained motionless in that position. The hands of the old man, which, at this point, were at last seen to tremble, were immersed in the luxuriant locks of the son: and when he raised his head, and disengaged himself from Bindo's embrace, a few tears fell trickling upon the border of his robe.

A number of the soldiers, who had been intimate friends of Baccio, now approached the bier, one after another, and made the sign of the cross over him with the consecrated candles. The movement of the moustache showed that they were repeating prayers in aid of his soul. Fra Benedetto, who with some of the other monks, had come to offer to Niccolò a few words of comfort, and do him honor at the door of the church as he departed, saluted him meekly.

"Fra Benedetto," said the old man, as he moved to go away, "I beseech you to remember Lamberto in your prayers, that God may restore him to us in health and safety. He wrote me that, in a few days, he should be in Florence—but the cavalry of the Marchese del Vasto have been seen on the Bologna road—God forbid that—Be of good courage, Lisa," continued he, turning to his daughter, who showed much emotion on hearing these words, "Lamberto is not a child, he knows what

ought to be done ; and not many days will pass, before, with the help of God, he will be in a place of safety." Lisa, pressing close to her sister, concealed her face in such a way, that it was impossible to see its expression as she listened to the words of her father. Those among the bystanders, who knew of the relation existing between Lamberto and Lisa, attributed this shrinking from observation, to the bashfulness natural to young maidens on such occasions.

Niccolò, meanwhile, accompanied by his family, and followed by those who had remained in church, went out, and no one was left in S. Marco but the sacristan; who, drawing the hem of the winding-sheet over the face of the deceased, and extinguishing the lights, withdrew by the door of the vestry.

When the mass was ended, Fra Giorgio had retired to his cell, and closed the door. The loud laugh that had escaped him in church vexed him ; he was conscious of having done wrong, and he experienced that bitter remorse, that indignation against himself which arises in the heart of men when they find themselves compelled, with futile effort, to contend against inveterate habits. Not that the desire to cancel the errors of the past by the austerity of the cloistral life, was at all cooled in him, and indeed, during the first two years, things had gone with him quietly enough. If his memory sometimes brought to mind his former military exploits, he considered this (so admonished by his superiors) a temptation of the devil, and used his utmost efforts to resist it. Sometimes he almost entirely succeeded in subduing his impulsive nature, so intolerant of check, so easily set on fire, so prone to rush from words to deeds. The other monks, knowing what he had been, and how difficult it was for him to keep on his guard, made kindly allowance for him, though perhaps in heart, they loved him little, since Fra Giorgio's manners were anything but agreeable to men of quiet habits, and though among themselves they gave him the *soubriquet* of "Fra Bombardo," still, in speaking of him, they always concluded with, "he seems to think that he is a soldier still, and that he must not be provoked ; but, after all, he is not so very bad, poor fellow !"

But now that the siege was begun, when throughout Florence nothing was to be seen but cavalry, infantry, and men-at-arms, and day and night nothing was heard but an incessant firing of arquebuses and artillery, the beating of tambours, and the playing of fifes and trumpets, and nothing was talked of but the different modes of warfare, offensive and defensive, then, the habit of St. Dominick began to appear to Fra Giorgio *heavier than four coats of mail*. At night, in the quiet of the

dormitory, while the silence around him was unbroken save by the low deep snoring of the monks who slept in the adjoining cells, the poor lay-brother, could get very little repose, so harassed was he by the hundred images of battle which presented themselves in his sleep, whenever he lost himself for a moment. Constrained to watch, he would have recourse to his prayers, but these not bringing holy thoughts, he would angrily seize the scourge which he kept hanging on the wall over his pillow, and use it mercilessly upon himself; with head bent, eyes closed, and clenched teeth, he sustained this conflict with himself, with as little compassion as he had shown in previous combats with his fellow-men. Oftentimes, the temptation had its origin in real and present causes. Sometimes he heard the distant tramp of a troop of horse; he listened, he held his breath, they came nearer, nearer; arrived in the Piazza di S. Marco, they discharged their arms directly under his window; the concussion made the window-panes ring again; they passed on, turned a corner, the sound died away and at last was lost to the ear. Then he drew breath again; for by dint of long training, he could detect in the confused sounds all the different causes that produced them. "That," he would say to himself, "was the clash of a shield; that, a sword-point striking against a breast-plate; that, a horse pricked with the spur for slipping on the pavement; that, a spear striking against a helmet." His brethren disturbed by the return of his military propensities, at length he found it almost impossible to sleep; and it seemed to him that he was fast losing his mind. During the day he was as silently intolerable to his equals and morose with his superiors; and every time a discharge of artillery met his ear, he would mutter between his teeth, "This is no place for me!" At the time he entered into the religious life, his health and his whole constitution was so enfeebled and worn by the many hardships he had suffered, that perhaps without wronging him, it may be supposed that this diminution of the physical forces had in part determined his vocation; but the quiet, methodical life of the convent had restored him, and feeling himself now as strong and sound as ever, he was continually saying to himself, "This is no place for me!"

These very words had just escaped his lips, when he heard the steps of a man approaching his cell. On reaching it, the party rapped twice, saying "Deo gratias." "Sempre Deo gratias, come in!" responded Fra Giorgio, but the ill-humor with which he pronounced these words, was in little accordance with their meaning. The door opened, and a lay-brother appeared who said, "Father Benedetto desires to see you." Fra

Giorgio readily grasped the occasion of this summons, and he said to himself, "now I shall get a lecture." However, he set off boldly, and resolved on the way, since the opportunity offered, to try by some means or other to extricate himself from the painful dilemma in which he was placed. He found the Superior in his study, with spectacles on nose he was engaged in reading a folio volume of St. Augustine. Fra Benedetto elevated his nose in the air, to bring on the same line the pupils of his eyes, the lenses of his spectacles, and the face of the lay-brother, and looked at him a moment, as if his physiognomy was to serve to regulate the nature of the lecture he was about to administer. Fra Giorgio's countenance was compunctionous and modest, but on his face at this moment, compunction and modesty were rather alarming symptoms. The good old man, however, taking courage, and conquering the repugnance he felt at entering upon such a subject with such a man, took off his spectacles, and laying them upon his book, said: "Fra Giorgio, for some time I have observed certain things in you that displease me. Perhaps I ought to have spoken to you before now, but, unwilling to impute blame to you, although your conduct appeared wrong to me, and expecting that in some way or other you would, of yourself, change your line of conduct, I have kept silence. But now, it is absolutely necessary for me to do my duty. How strangely you are changed, my son! I no longer find you as formerly, solicitously mindful of your duties; once you were always in church, and there was no disqualification of your devoutness. Once you listened to reproof with a serene countenance, desirous apparently only to reform. Now I see you always with a darkened visage; if you are spoken to, you seem to take it unkindly. The brethren all say, 'Fra Giorgio is quite another man, he does nothing but contend with us.' Remember, my son, the best part of your life, you have given to the devil; the Lord might have left you in the road to hell, but He has extended His mercy to you; do not take back what you have given him, now that you have consecrated to him the other part, the remaining years of your life; do not, I beseech you, turn back, my son! and then, this morning, at mass, what could provoke your scandalous impropriety of conduct? It pains me to have to reprove you, for a fault committed against myself. I harbor not the least animosity against you for laughing at me, or at my terror (for indeed we all are in some way miserable sinners). I have erred also, my son, I confess, for if my thoughts had been with God, as they ought to have been, they would not have been distracted by a thing so trivial. What, then, remains for us to do? To

humble ourselves both before God, to acknowledge that we are creatures, that, without the Divine grace, we should stumble at every step, and therefore we should not fail to do all that in us lies, to obtain His pardon by prayers and penances."

Fra Giorgio, whom a severe reprimand would perhaps have only irritated, was touched by the mildness and sincere humility of the Superior. "You are a saint," said he, "and I have been much to blame, but —"

"No, my son, I am not a saint, I am a sinner, a greater sinner than you, I know it too well, but we have nothing to do with that now. I am glad to see that you acknowledge your fault as fully as I could wish. Bad habits are like weeds; uproot them in one place, they spring up in another. I pity you, — after living so many years in camp among soldiers, in the midst of licentious men, one gets accustomed to this loose way of living, so chequered by reverses, that if a man attempts to reform, it is extremely difficult. I pity you from my heart. But," he continued, smiling, as if by a stroke of pleasure to soften still more the rebuke, "it is *our* business also to make war, to strive to destroy the old enemy, and in this we must be every one to arm himself, and *us* more than others, to be ever on the alert, to fight constantly, *violenta e costante*!"

Before we give Fra Giorgio's reply, we beg the reader to think if it ever happens to him when talking face to face with some one on a subject in which he feels deeply interested, to catch a word or phrase that absorbs his whole attention, the other going on with his discourse, while he, ruminating on that word or phrase, hears not a syllable of what follows; returning to him at the end, as if to resume the broken thread in vain; and, at last, in order to an understanding of the matter, it is necessary to recommence from the beginning. If this situation be not new to our reader, it may be the worse for his affairs, but it is without doubt, better for the understanding of our story, since Fra Giorgio found himself at this moment in this very predicament. Gathering from the first words of the Superior, that he viewed his fault with more leniency than he had reason to expect, instead of listening to his exhortation, till he ended his exhortation, he said to himself, "I am a monk, but I am a combatant to the good father, that I am bound to remain in the convent any longer, so that all Fra Roberto's language, if it reached his ears, would not do him any harm. But would it be *our* business to wage war, it becomes *every one* to arm himself. God to recover himself, and his bewildered brain, that could with difficulty

comprehend more than one idea at a time, interpreted these words in their most literal sense. He felt quite encouraged, and said to himself, "even *he* now understands that if we do not all help against these Imperialists—if the monks too do not lend a helping hand, it will go hard with us—it's an ill wind that blows nobody good—this morning's cannonading has convinced him that affairs begin to grow serious." But these thoughts which have required of us so long an explanation, flashed like lightning through Fra Giorgio's mind, who believing every difficulty now removed, said, with the eagerness of one who sees the way unexpectedly opened to the accomplishment of his wishes, "Fra Benedetto, I have no other wish in the world than *that*; and if I have shown ill-humor for some time past, you must know that it has been for no other reason than this, that I consider myself, with God's aid, good for something yet; it seems to me that I have borne myself too remissly in this war (so unlike the other wars in which I have been engaged for so many years, and chiefly to no good purpose). But I am certain, that for me to fight now, will be a merit before God, and I intend to do so, and to the best of my abilities, and may God make me thus worthy of His glory; and I would rather begin to-day than to-morrow."

The old man continuing to put his own construction upon what the lay-brother was saying, wondered at seeing so much pious fervor, when he had expected something so different. "Ah! my lecture has had a very good effect," said he to himself, and highly pleased to find him so well disposed, he added aloud: "God bless you, my son, a thousand fold! it is not to be denied, that when men like you do turn to religion, they do it in good earnest,—everything depends upon knowing how to direct them aright; the bold heart which, as you just now said, has heretofore been enlisted in a worldly strife, must now engage in a holy cause—the struggle will be long and serious—the enemy is powerful and cunning—*leo rugiens*—but God will be with you, be not afraid."

"*I* afraid?" said Fra Giorgio with a smile of surprise, "I have never known what fear was!" but, he added to himself, "*you* have found a person who is frightened enough."

"I know it, I know you are not afraid of anything, but let me tell you, that to confide too much in our own strength, is an evil, a serious evil; but I will add no more now, we must not undertake too much at once. Go, and may the Lord aid you and give you strength!"

Fra Giorgio turned to go away, but on reaching the door a

thought occurred to him, and he stepped back and said: "Fra Benedetto, I have one favor to ask."

"Speak! if it is in my power, it is granted."

"Oh! as to that, it is enough that you are willing — but I know very well it is not just the thing — the old proverb says, 'he who gives and takes again, runs the risk of hellish pain,' but I can think of no other way — I hope you will not take it ill."

"Well, say on, speak plainly."

"Look here — you see I am not used to fighting on foot.* I am of the old school, you understand; for it is only about twenty years or so, that any decent people (leaving out the Swiss) have thought of placing themselves in the infantry; it may be said that the first to bring the infantry into any repute, was Signor Gonzalo Hernandez, the great Captain, — you must have heard of him, — and to tell the truth, his soldiers acquitted themselves handsomely; for at the battle of Cerignola, had you seen the French men-at-arms charge a battalion of these Spanish foot soldiers, you'd have thought they would have soon made mince-meat of them; but no, with their pikes levelled they stood firm as if nailed to the ground, and these earth-quakes of Frenchmen came down upon them like a bolt of lightning. 'St. Denis!' 'St. Denis!' was the cry, but St. Denis was of no avail, they might as well have charged a bastion."

The reader may imagine that Fra Benedetto on hearing this effusion, opened his eyes very wide, and came to the conclusion that Fra Giorgio was entirely beside himself. But his repentant pupil, as he thought, had not done yet.

"Enough said about the infantry; I know well there are some brave fellows among them, but every one has his own way of doing things, and I am too old to learn a new business, so if you wish me to do a good thing, you must allow me. . . . I know I am very bold — you will wonder at me, but at the extremity to which the city is reduced, I could not, I am certain,

I could not procure one for two hundred ducats. Whoever had one would use it himself; and then, where could I get the money? In short, not to spin out the matter any longer,

* The infantry was regarded as comparatively worthless, and was neglected till it was really so. These tactics maintained their ground for centuries in most parts of Europe. That foot soldiers could withstand the charge of heavy cavalry was thought utterly impossible, till, towards the close of the fifteenth century, the rude mountaineers of Switzerland discovered the spell, and astonished the most experienced generals, by weaving the dreaded shock on an impenetrable forest of pikes — *Macanudo*.

if you do not give me permission to make use of my horse, I shall find myself greatly embarrassed."

When Fra Giorgio was about midway in this part of his harangue, Fra Benedetto replaced his spectacles, and with both hands resting on the arms of his big chair, leaned forward, with his head raised towards the lay-brother, and looked steadily at him.

When Giorgio had done speaking, the old man was mute for half a minute, still continuing his fixed gaze; then, in tones which expressed the utmost astonishment, he said! "Horse! horse! what in the name of the Holy Saints has a horse to do with it? How have you understood me? Have I told you, pray, that you might re-enter the ranks of the army?"

"But, my father, it is no harm to fight in a good cause, and this is not fighting in a bad sense of the word, and as I have already told you, I am still able to do duty on horseback, but not afoot!"

"And who said anything to you about doing duty on horseback or afoot, with the faculties God has given you? I talk to you about performing the duties of a good priest, and you rave about *horses and infantry*. Oh! I think you must be making sport of me. Go! go! That you should have talked to me in such a manner, and that I should have listened to you! O! Lord! Lord! give me patience with this man!"

"Be not angry, Fra Benedetto," said Fra Giorgio, perceiving the mistake, and quite discomfited at finding himself just at the commencement, when he supposed matters already settled, "no one is to blame, you have understood the thing in one way, and I in another."

Seeing that the Superior was silent, and breathed hard, with a certain shaking of the head that betokened no good, he resolved at once, since he had betrayed the state of his feelings, to try his powers of persuasion; and coming directly to the point, with the air of a man who is not to be turned from his purpose, he said:

"Now Fra Benedetto, pray listen to me; if you had not sent for me, I should have come to you of myself, for I am, and have long been, in a state of torment greater than I can bear. I confess to you that this morning I committed a fault in time of mass. I confess to you that the other brethren have a thousand causes of complaint against me, because my ways are not those of a good priest. I am a bad man, a great sinner, but what can I do? I find myself wasting away. I lose my sleep, and day and night I am fretting because I am not *on the walls, in the midst of the cannonading!* What can I

do if my nature is so strange, so senseless, so perverse, you may say, that I never feel happy, only when I find myself in the midst of the din of battle? I have not failed in my duty of endeavoring, according to your instructions, to expel these fantasies. I have fasted, I have prayed, I have scourged myself, but all in vain! Now I declare to you that my heart is not in the least withdrawn from the glorious St. Dominick, nor from his holy rule, and that I wish to live and die in it. I remember my sins, and I know that I must do penance for them, and I will do it. In this war, I have no wish to reap any personal advantage, to rise in rank, or gain any worldly end. I wish to engage in it because, I cannot live in this way any longer without losing my senses, because I wish to defend the cause of the people, like our blessed Fra Girolamo; and as to penance, you will perform it in the convent, while mine will be inflicted by the weapons of war, God alone knows how!

"I am not *in sacris*: you know I have no latin learning. But that may come yet. The good memory of the Cardinal Seneverino, I saw him with these two eyes he had both at that time at the battle of Ravenna. Such an elegant horseman, so daring and so well equipped! He could compete with Signor Giovanni himself! * and then Napoleone Orsino, the Abate di Farfa, did not he lay waste Casentino with his light-horse? And then so many others. And if there ever was an instance when it was the duty of you priests to lend physical aid, it is this, without doubt. Would you have me say it plainer? This army is no joke. I see clouds thickening round Florence; and if each one of us is not equal to three, some time may come when we shall repent of it. I know these Bisogni: † and these German foot soldiers, I saw them at the sacking of Rome where I also — it is but too true. . . . Enough, may God forgive me for it! And if the enemy do succeed in taking the city, then farewell Paris, one day or the other, there shall not be left standing there church or convent! Now you have heard me — you know my mind — give me then a free discharge, and with God's help you shall not have to repent of it."

The good old man, hearing this so resolute declaration of

* Giovanni di Medici who was considered a paragon at this time among the Italian soldiers.

† Name given in jest to the Spanish soldiers, because their chief, in quartering their soldiers, and making the necessary requisitions, used to give receipts, which all began with the phrase, *Che bisogno*, etc., (it is necessary, etc.)

the lay-brother, remained speechless. He was not destitute of that courage which sustains the virtuous man in the discharge of his individual duties, but as has been seen, the courage of the soldier was none of his, and he would gladly have found himself farther off from these *blessed* cannons. Therefore that a man on the confines of old age, should find himself unable to exist out of the midst of this, to him, terrific cannonading, seemed a thing so incredible, that he believed poor Fra Giorgio was afflicted with lunacy. He consequently abstained from chiding him, and hastily considering the matter, he said to himself, "it would not be amiss to get rid of him peaceably, before he does any mischief, or makes a disturbance in the convent," so, concealing his displeasure, he answered :

"I should certainly never have expected this ; but since you are so desirous — though for my own part, I cannot understand it. Enough ! if you wish it — not being *in sacris*, it may be allowed you. But reflect well what perils you will have to encounter, what bodily sufferings ! And how will it be with your soul ? You will return to your old ways, into the midst of lawless company, among knaves who will set before you a thousand temptations !"

"As to that, you say the truth, but God knows my motives, he will aid me."

"Remember then, defence is lawful, but it ought to be done with the least possible injury : *cum moderamine inculpatae tutelæ*, wound the least vital parts, never the head, never the chest !"

The lay-brother could not help smiling at these directions which showed how little the Superior knew of the customs of war, however, but he listened patiently with eyes bent upon the ground, (and this he could well afford to do, such was his joy at finding himself again a soldier) to a last admonition of Fra Benedetto, full of counsels and precepts concerning charity, prudence, and good and bad example, which, in the fear of being tedious, we will not repeat to our reader. When he had ended, Fra Giorgio said, "Then you are willing I should take the horse."

"Yes, yes ; for, at any rate, the nuts are ground, and the ass will do for the olives. May God bless you !"

Fra Giorgio went away satisfied. The other looked after him, clasped his hands, pressed his lips tightly together, and raised his eyes to heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

"THE horse is provided, and you imagine, possibly, that everything is completed; but it remains to be seen if he can carry you; for you may be reckoning without your host." So said Fra Giorgio to himself, as he proceeded towards the stable. He walked along, cogitating as he went, and feeling rather faint-hearted, like one who, about to incur some necessary expense, and not having very lately counted the money in his purse, prepares to do so, but his heart tells him there is not enough.

When he first entered the convent, he used to visit his horse occasionally, and always exerted himself to scrape together something for him, to atone for the scarcity and poverty of the pittance furnished him from the convent garden. But, for a beast accustomed to have his sides rounded every day with hay, oats and barley, something more was needed than the stinted fare of the ass and the two meagre cows, who shared his labors and his lodgings; so in spite of the care of Fra Giorgio, after the first month, the poor horse's hip bones began to project, and soon his ribs might easily be counted; the neck, back, and rump seemed to remain habitually in the same line; even the ears, no longer able to resist the laws of gravity, inclined themselves on the temples, and poor Griffin (so he had been named by the Fanfulla of other times) acquired the serious, afflicted, and immovable air of the ass, his neighbor. Fra Giorgio, not having the heart to witness this ugly metamorphosis as it went on, had abandoned him in despair, and for more than a year had not set foot in the stable. He entered it now, prepared for the worst. Above the cows and the ass, he saw rise the back of his unfortunate Griffin, but he looked like one of those rare hideous animals that are preserved in museums, or to speak more correctly, whose skins are placed upright on four sticks, a few ribs of wood placed across, and the whole stuffed here and there with straw and hair.

Fra Giorgio put both hands to his head, and then turned to flee as if he had seen a hobgoblin. However, he checked him-

self, — so long as there was a thread of hope, he would not renounce it. He looked at the shoulders and fore-feet, and found them not so bad after all. So, putting together a bushel of oats and barley, and mixing it with water, he placed it before the horse. "With your belly full, we'll talk together again," said he, and for the present he left him.

Meantime, he thought he would give a look at his arms, saying to himself, "I shall have something to do to *them*, I fancy." He went to a room on the ground floor, a kind of store-room, where he had left them when he first put on the Dominican habit. It was a large room, situated in an angle of the cloister, in which were thrown at random, old furniture, and various paraphernalia of the sacristy; wood lay there seasoning, and apples mellowing on the straw; there were ladders, jugs and old mats, garlies and onions hanging from the rafters, and in the midst of this confusion, he found partly hanging on the wall, and partly thrown down on the ground, all the pieces which composed his armor, together with the saddle, bridle and other equipments of the horse. The iron work was rusty, the leather cracked and covered with a velvet of green and blue mould. Of the cobwebs and dust we will say nothing.

He gathered up everything as well as he could, and carried the whole to his cell, where, with the aid of oil and a piece of soft wood, by dint of an hour's hard labor, he discovered that the rust had not essentially damaged his weapons.

Returning to the stable, he found his horse somewhat restored considering his long fasting, and untying him from the manger, he led him out into the little area between the house and garden. He put on the bridle, and, springing on his bare back, began to pace him backwards and forwards. The poor beast, whose appetite was now satisfied, — a thing which had not happened for a long time, — had recovered something of his former spirit, and really manœuvred much better than his master could have expected. Fra Giorgio leaped to the ground, highly pleased, and flattering himself that a better fare for a few days would complete the good work already begun, he returned to his cell. Not to lose time (as every moment he felt the belligerent mania increasing upon him), he prepared to go forth immediately to ascertain where he was to enlist his services. He smoothed his hair and beard, adjusted his tunic, and, drawing his cowl over his eyes, soon found himself in the Piazza di S. Marco, on his way to the Renajo de' Serristore (having passed the bridge Rubaconte, *now called Grazie*), where dwelt the Signor Malatesta Baglioni,

Captain General of the Florentines. The time which Fra Giorgio spent on the road, we think it will not be amiss, before proceeding farther in our story, to employ in placing under the eye of the reader a picture of the extremity to which Florence was at this time reduced, and the political conjunctures which led to it.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century, Europe had been agitated by mighty convulsions. Three men, to whom it was given to draw after them the multitude, by the authority of high station, by the power of arms, and by the might of intellect, Charles V., Francis I., and Martin Luther, seemed at this time to vie with each other in turning poor humanity topsy-turvy.

The first two, becoming enemies after they ceased to be rivals in their pretensions to the Imperial Crown, obtained by Charles, were mutually exasperated against each other, and continued so long as they lived in a constant alternation of long atrocious wars, stained by fraud and cruelty, and brief seasons of peace, basely accorded and often treacherously interrupted.

The third, a poor Agustinian friar, armed with doctrine, with intellect, and with audacity rendered still bolder by the ill humor which ecclesiastical abuses had generated among the common people of Germany, kindled that conflagration which was eventually to consume and neutralize Catholicism over half Europe.

Ambition, the vain and adventurous love of glory and religious fanaticism, which were the dominant passions of these three men, because the passions of all in the sixteenth century, at the commencement of which, human society struck out into a new path which it was destined to tread without looking back from that time till the eighteenth.

The kings who, until then, had conducted brief local wars, with the aid of vassals obliged to follow them only for a limited time, were extremely perplexed to find money to pay soldiers who never left their standards, and who were employed when and where it pleased their prince. Then were laid the foundations of that system of numerous standing armies, and of ever-increasing taxes,—a system that had its origin in legitimate causes, but which has given birth in our own day to grievous calamities.

Political power, which had heretofore been entirely circumscribed within the limits of each nation, now expanded itself to keep up with the new condition of things, and the idea was conceived of establishing an equilibrium in Europe, by which the stronger and more compact governments should sustain each

other, consolidating their powers by reciprocal interchanges and concessions,

Religion, founded until then upon authority alone, was shaken by the doctrine of individual examination, and the declining faith dwindled away in proportion to the increasing numbers of the followers of reform. These influences, operating upon the rival monarchs, sometimes disturbed, and, at other times aided their designs, rendering more complicated their frequent strifes, in which the lesser states were more or less constrained to take part.

To narrate the many events which had resulted from this state of things, is not necessary for our story. It will be sufficient to touch upon those which had the most influence on the destinies of the Florentines.

After the treaty of Madrid, by which Francis I. recovered his liberty, it was soon evident that his misfortunes and his ungenerous treatment at the hands of Charles V. had extinguished in the French monarch that chivalrous loyalty which had led him so many times to push confidence to credulity, and generosity to imprudence. He not only found means to justify the refusal to cede Burgundy, according to agreement, but he made himself the head of a league against Charles V., called the Holy League, to which the principal states joined themselves out of mistrust of the unlimited power of the emperor. Duke Sforzia, Clement VII., and the Florentines became united, the latter being forced to subserve the designs of a pope of the Medici family, who was then master of the city. But, on the one hand, the Duke of Urbino, leader of the army of the league, with the remembrance of the injuries suffered from that family,* still ranking in his mind, entered their service with reluctance; and, on the other, King Charles, aiming only to obtain the liberty of his sons, who had been left as hostages in Spain, was making use of the assistance of the Italians to forward his repeated solicitations at the court of Madrid, throwing upon them all the weight of the war.

The confederates soon discovered this double dealing, and, their ardor abating, each turned his attention to his own interests. The Pope, whom the Colonnese, aided by Don Ugo di Moncada, had assaulted and forced to take refuge in the castle of San Angelo, concluded an agreement by which he was to be the first to detach himself from the league, and reclaim his people of Lombardy.

These events occurred in 1526. In the meantime Charles

* *Leo X. had despoiled the family of the Rovere, of the Duchy of Urbino.*

V. was acquiring power in Italy. The soldiers under George von Frandsberg, had united with those of Bourbon, and were moving towards Rome. The Pope, entrapped by a truce concluded with the viceroy, believed himself secure, and dismissed his army. But the soldiers of Bourbon, without regarding the truce or anything else, took possession of Rome, and gave it that tremendous sacking narrated in our second chapter. The Florentines, thinking themselves fairly rid of Clement VII., rose in arms; and after having driven away, almost under the eye of the league, the cardinal of Cortona, and Ippolito, and Alessandro de' Medici, reorganized their city, and re-established a republican government. But the existence of the new state was doomed to be of short duration. It did not suit Charles V. that the Florentines, who had for so long a time been constant in their friendship with France, should remain in freedom. The Pope was desirous, at whatever cost, to see his family re-established in the government of Florence, and the Venetians, through that policy deemed wise by the Italian states, till they saw it gradually result in the ruin of all, desired and, perhaps, covertly aided in the persecution of the Florentines. The French king alone could and ought to have defended them; but it was soon perceived, and many have since found it so to their cost, that the French know admirably well how to draw others into difficulty for their own benefit, and then leave them to extricate themselves as they can. The emperor, wishing to pass into Italy, and regulate matters there in his own way, before attending to his affairs in Germany, became aware of the importance of placing some Italian prince in power, who should hold his authority from him.

The Pope, who, for a long time had been solicitous of obtaining peace, was now invited by Charles to become his ally, as the latter was desirous of cancelling the outrages sustained by the head of the church, at the hands of his soldiery. While the articles of a general peace between Charles, Francis I. and their allies, were undergoing a tardy discussion, Europe heard with surprise that the treaty of Barcelona had terminated the differences between the Pope and the Emperor, the latter having among other engagements, assumed that of re-establishing in Florence the dominion of the Medici.

This unhappy city now saw the cloud suspended over its head grow darker and more threatening than ever; and when King Francis, shortly after, signed the treaty of Cambray, abandoning, to his eternal disgrace, all his allies, then the Florentines knew that henceforth they must rest their hopes of deliverance *only in God, in the justice of their cause and in themselves.* But

in order to have their own strength available, there should have been among them a spirit of unity. Instead of this, the city was divided into the two opposing parties of the Piagnoni and the Palleschi, irreconcilable from old hate and recent injuries. Those among the citizens who had risen to wealth and honors under the shadow of the Medici, for the most part men of pleasure, lovers of pomp and parade, and also many among the lower classes, mechanics, who, from the large expenditures of this family, were enabled to make immense profits, had seen its expulsion with regret, and were ready to seize the first opportunity for its recal; and their party, taking its name from the Medicean coat of arms (six balls on a field of gold), was called Pallescan.* These people cared nothing for liberty, but preferred the merry life and the license of manners they enjoyed under the Medici.

Their adversaries, pupils so to say of Fra Girolamo, and followers of his strict doctrines, professed the greatest austerity of life, a horror of all amusements, even though lawful, and favored a democracy in its most extended sense. The habit of having always at their tongue's end some maxim of morality, or precept of austerity, and of constantly deploring the wickedness of a worldly life, had obtained for them the name of Piagnoni.†

Whether this zeal for religion and liberty was sincere in every one, or whether in many, it served to mask violent and ambitious designs, we will not presume to decide. In all ages leaders of parties have inscribed upon their banners, "We desire religion, liberty, and justice for all;" yet those who have followed them have often found that the true inscription would have been, "We desire a religion which shall serve our ends, liberty for ourselves alone, and justice in our own fashion;" and though such a remark may seem unnecessary, we cannot help adding that, with this honest use of terms, many of the world's strifes might have been avoided. The enmity between these two parties was, however, anything but avowed. The Piagnoni held the city, and the Palleschi, that they might be allowed to remain in quiet, studiously concealed their feelings, and their hypocrisy alone saved them from being hewn in pieces, put to torture upon the slightest suspicion, or sent to the galley or scaffold. This oppression increasing their hatred of the dominant party, they made amends for their lack of power by their cunning, and their secret negotiations for the restoration of the Medici, were con-

* From Palla, a ball; plur. palla.

† Piagnone, signifies a mourner.

stantly in progress, and ended at last in the ruin of the republic.

Between these two opposite parties, as is always the case in times of revolution, there was a third, called Neutral, whose wishes were more moderate. Though this party also desired to live free, it was disposed to seek reconciliation with the Pope; and in case the Medici returned as private citizens, they were willing to try the possibility of avoiding war and at the same time of saving the city. The leader of this party, called also the Ottimati (grandeas), because most of its adherents were rich, and this it was that made them timorous, was Niccolò Capponi. This faction, as we shall see, was the final cause of the ruin of Florence.

Meantime the news of the disembarkation of Charles V., with great preparations at Genoa, created immense excitement throughout Italy and particularly among the Florentines, who were greatly dismayed by it. Their hopes were somewhat raised, however, by the words of the Gonfaloniere Carducci and others of the Piagnoni party, among whom were Niccolò Guicciardini, Giovanni Battista Cei, Jacopo Gherardi and Luigi Soderini, and they resolved to do their utmost and die rather than lose their liberty.

Ambassadors to the emperor were chosen from the neutrals, Tommaso Soderini, Matteo Strozzi, Raffaello Girolami, and Niccolò Capponi were those elected, and they hastened to Genoa. The answer of the emperor, though courteous, was brief and absolute, since he was determined to satisfy the Pope in all things. "Honor must be rendered to the Pope," were the words; "Florence must become the prey of the Medici," the substance. The high chancellor then made use of a mode of expression more severe. He began with the usual pretensions "that Florence was a fief of the empire, that the Florentines having entered into a league with the French king, had forfeited all their rights, privileges and liberties, and that it was only the great humanity of the emperor that would induce him to pardon their perfidy and ingratitude, and *that* on the sole condition of the restoration of the Medici."

The ambassadors answered briefly, that Florence always had been free, and that she had a right to be so; and, breaking off the negotiation, returned home.

The vanishing of the last hope of avoiding war raised, instead of sinking, the courage of the Florentines. With a generosity and ardor of which history has few examples, and which merited a better fortune, they resolved to defend themselves to the last, without regard to the treachery of France,

the anger of Pope Clement, or the fearful temerity of attempting alone to withstand all the power of Charles V.

It was a sight to wring the heart, to see such a multitude of citizens, including the women and even children, all determine with so much confidence to turn the face to fortune, and confront with such promptitude and spirit, the risks of a struggle so unequal, privations, hunger, wounds and death, rather than submit to injustice; and then to think *how* the exercise of so much virtue ended! We cannot resist the desire of enlightening the readers as to the methods which were adopted to carry into effect this generous determination, and we feel sure he will not take it amiss.

CHAPTER V.

IN the first place, the image of the Virgin Mary of the Imbruneta, and the picture of Santa Maria Primerana di Fiesole, were brought in solemn procession into Florence, and deposited in Santa Maria del Fiore, in the chapel of S. Zanobi. Many new captains were next appointed, especially among the black bands,* and the number of companies was increased, until, after a general review, it was found that there were in Florence alone, without reckoning the suburbs, more than eight thousand paid foot soldiers, under six colonels and about eighty captains, seventeen of whom were Florentines. Besides these, the four quarters into which Florence was divided, San Spirito, Santa Croce, San Giovanni and Santa Maria Novella, each had four Gonfalons, under which were enrolled all the young men, forming sixteen companies of four hundred each, each company electing their captain, lieutenant, ensign, sergeant and corporal.

These companies, or bands, armed with pikes, corslets and arquebuses, well disciplined and excellently equipped, were composed of men from seventeen to forty years of age. Each company was required to assemble once a month in a public square, or piazza, in its own quarter, where its members performed evolutions and fired at a mark and exercised themselves thus in all the various military tactics. They were very soon able to compete with the paid infantry. It was also enacted by law that, every year, four of these young men should each deliver in one of the principal churches an oration, whose subject should be liberty. It did not please God that this institution should be long-lived.

In addition to the infantry, Amico d' Arsoli and Jacopo Picchi, Saneſe captains, were enlisted in the service of the Comune, with their cavalry, which, in all, amounted to not more than four hundred men.

* The companies commanded by Giovanni di Medici, were dressed in mourning after his death, and on that account were called the "black bands."

To Ercole d' Este, eldest son of the Duke of Ferrara, was destined the command of the paid soldiery, as Captain General of the Florentines.

The "Ten" sent him a summons to put himself in readiness to assume the command, and, at the same time, forwarded the sum of three thousand eight hundred ducats to defray the expenses of recruiting a company of one thousand foot as his body guard. But the Duke Alphonso, notwithstanding his plighted word, either fearful of the Pope, or dreading to involve himself with the Emperor, found pretexts for evading this requisition, and would neither send his son nor restore the money. In consequence of this treachery, the Florentines were forced to entrust the general command to Signor Malatesta Baglioni, son of Gio Paolo, a soldier of the republic; and the orator Bernardo, of Terrazano, was sent to him at Perugia to make use of every means by flatteries and promised honors, to maintain him in the faith, and prevent him from being corrupted by the Pope, who was indefatigable in his attempts to this effect. Unfortunately for the Florentines, Malatesta accepted and assumed the command. The question naturally arises, why the Florentines should entrust so much to a man whom they had so many reasons for holding in suspicion? But, in the first place, time pressed, and it was not easy to find one so well versed in the military art as Malatesta; and then the regulations of the army were so unstable, and the discipline so corrupt, that the leaders of the different bands which constituted the army, would never have submitted to yield obedience to one raised by his virtues from their own rank to the supreme command, since they could hardly bear to be subject to one who was entitled to be called an independent prince.

In order to raise money enough to pay all these people, sixteen officials were elected, called the Bank, who were to furnish the Commune with eighty thousand florins at ten per cent. interest. A magistracy of four citizens was empowered to raise a public loan, and at the same time it was ordained that the balance of all previous impositions should be restored. All the goods of the twenty-one arts or trades, and those of the religious fraternities and societies of the city, as well as the country, were sold at auction. Clement VII., by one of his pontifical briefs, had authorized the selling of the ecclesiastical property, while the Medici were still in Florence, that the money received from the sale might maintain their pomp: this was not done at that time, and now the money was to be *appropriated to the cause of liberty.*

Previous to 1526, the walls were defended by innumerable



towers, but the Medici, by advice of Pietro Navarro, had caused them to be thrown down. Now Michel Angelo Buonarrotti certainly had appeared to waver, when he removed from Florence at the time she was menaced by her enemies, but soon returning to himself, he prepared to perform the duties of a good citizen by endeavoring to fortify the walls in every direction. He enclosed within their circuit the hills that lie between Porta S. Niccolò and S. Miniato, surrounding them with a bastion, thus placing within a fortress, the convent, church and campanile or bell tower of S. Miniato. He superintended the erection of many other bastions, where he considered them necessary, with their flanks and fosses and bombardier, according to the mode in which this art was conducted at that time. The outer surface of such bastions was composed of rude bricks made of pounded earth mixed with rubbish, and within were heaped vast quantities of earth and wood well pressed together.

In the council of the "Eighty," it was voted that, "throughout the suburbs of the city, all edifices, small or great, sacred or profane, that could furnish any convenience to those without the walls or any inconvenience to those within, should be immediately levelled to the ground." The owners, however, were written down as creditors to the amount of the value of the property as estimated by appraisal. The suburbs at this time, as well as the city, were rich in houses, villas, palaces, vegetable and flower gardens,—the latter, the finest in the world. It is impossible to conceive the loss which this destruction occasioned to the public, as well as to individuals, some families of whom were injured to the amount of twenty thousand florins. But the citizens, regardless of money or possessions, received this enactment with great zeal, and, going forth in haste, old and young, rich and poor, even the owners themselves, proceeded to this or that villa, and not only destroyed the houses but spoiled the orchards and gardens, the fountains and fish-ponds, cutting down fruit and ornamental trees, uprooting vines, olive, citron and orange trees, returning to Florence with mules and asses laden with faggots, which were used in raising the bastions. Edifices of greater solidity were levelled with an instrument somewhat like a battering-ram. It was a beam held in a horizontal position by means of ropes: this was drawn and pushed with immense force by a great number of men who, animating each other with shouts and cries, and forcing the instrument with great violence against the building, brought to the ground long tracts of wall. *An occurrence took place in the course of these devastations,*



which shows in what high esteem the arts were held by the men of that time. A crowd of citizens, soldiers and countrymen, had thrown down with one of these machines a good part of the church and convent of S. Salvi. With reckless violence, they laid bare the walls until they reached the refectory in which was painted the "Last Supper," by Andrea del Sarto. All at once, they stopped as if they had lost the use of their arms; they had not the heart to lay hands on that marvellous work of art; they left standing the wall on which it was painted, and the picture remained entire.

The palace of Jacopo Salviati, the villa of Careggi of the house of Medici, were burned to the ground by a company of young men, led on by Dante and Lorenzo da Castiglione, two of the fiercest enemies of this family. Not long afterwards, Castello and Poggio a Cajano shared the same fate. These incendiarisms, however, not being done in the service of the city, but merely to gratify hatred of the enemy, were condemned by all reflecting men, and the Gonfaloniere Carduccio issued warrants for the punishment of their authors. But the times did not admit of much severity against such insolence, and the warrants were never executed.

Meantime, the Prince of Orange, Viceroy of Naples, had received orders from the Emperor to muster his troops to march against Florence at the citation of the Pope. The Viceroy arrived at Rome in the latter part of July with one hundred horse and one thousand arquebusiers, and established his quarters in Borgo in the Palazzo Salviati. Being admitted to a conference with the Pope, there was much to be done before they could come to an agreement. To the Pope, by nature niggardly and suspicious, the furnishing of subsidies for carrying on the war, seemed extremely burdensome; while, on the contrary, the prince Viceroy, a person of magnificent habits, could not endure that an enterprise so important, should be conducted with so much parsimony. They finally agreed upon the sums to be disbursed by the Apostolic Chamber, and the prince went to the camp at Aquila, where the army had remained under the conduct of Gian d' Urbino, to give orders to move on towards Fuligno, where mass was to be celebrated.

Rome, at this time all alive with the preparations for such a war, was rapidly filling with soldiers. Spaniards, Germans and Italians, soldiers of fortune, enlisted in crowds, their cupidity awakened by the hope of sacking Florence. The fact was considered so certain, (and still we continue to extol the good old times!) that there were those who, being summoned to *attend court*, and fearful that the delay would prevent them

the Pope, for the refusal of their opponents damages with interest, for withholding them from their share in the plunder of Florence!

The Pope, offended because the republic had sent ambassadors to the Emperor and not to him, appeared so inflamed with a desire for vengeance, that few dared attempt to appease him. Only two Florentine citizens, Jacopo Salviati and Roberto Purci, ventured to address him openly, urging him to consider the woes he was about to bring upon his country, and the infamy to which he was exposing himself. But Clement, having made himself believe that the Florentines would submit before they were reduced to extremity, was not to be turned from his purpose.

Under the orders of the Prince of Orange, the army was soon re-united in the plains around Fuligno, to the number of thirty-five thousand foot, and about one thousand two hundred horse. Among these were the Germans conducted into Italy by George von Frundsberg, or rather the survivors of the war, of the plague at Rome, and the famine of Naples, veteran and valiant soldiers.

The first lords and *condottieri* of Italy commanded this army. Among the principal captains might be reckoned Don Ferrante Gonzaga, brother of the Marquis of Mantua, Pier Luigi Farnese, Giovanni Battista Sanello Marzio, Piero, Sciarra Colonna, the Count Pier Maria Rossi di S. Secondo di Parma, Alessandro Vitelli da Città di Castello, Braccio and Sforza Bastiani. Afterwards arrived the Marquis del Vasto monsieur Ascanio Astigiano, and Giovanni da Sassatello, who, having received recruiting money from the Florentines, thought it well without returning them their money, to conduct his three thousand soldiers to the camp of Orange.

Fabrizio Maramba, of the Sardo nation, without entering the service of the Emperor, was, in the meantime, pillaging and robbing the Sanese and the inhabitants of Volterra, at the head of a troop of brigands rather than soldiers. Such was the miserable method in which war was conducted in these times!

Perugia, Cortona and Arezzo soon fell into the hands of the Imperialists, who, descending into the Vale of Arno, proceeded with few obstacles towards Florence.

The progress of the enemy having somewhat affected the courage of many of the citizens, the party of Neutrals succeeded in persuading the people to send ambassadors to the Pope. They were conducted to him with great difficulty, the roads being destroyed, the passes closed, and the country given up to plunder. The answer of Clement was, "that it con-

cerned his honor that the Florentines should surrender unconditionally, and then he would show the world that he also was a Florentine." As soon as the result of this mission was known, the minds of all, having now laid aside all thoughts of reconciliation, were turned to increase the munitions and strengthen the fortifications. The works on the walls, already considerably advanced, were prosecuted with greater vigor, especially those around the bastion of S. Miniato, and the Gonfaloniere in person urged on the work with incredible dispatch. When the sun set, the work was continued all night long by the light of torches. To the laborers and diggers, were added the soldiers, the young men, the women, the old men and the children, every one endeavoring to assist as long as his or her strength would permit, carrying earth, stones, and fagots, and contending with each other for the vilest and most fatiguing services, with that fierce joy, that is awakened in imminent perils, in those who know how to encounter them for the sake of the right. In fine, the fortifications were carried on to a degree that rendered them impregnable to an army of those times.

In proportion as the danger approached, the party of the Piagnoni became more severe towards the Palleschi. Many of these, belonging to the first families of Florence, had taken to flight, alarmed by the perils of the siege, or the persecutions of their adversaries, who accused them to the magistrates, insulted them in the public streets and squares, and had often attempted their lives. Dante da Castiglione and others of the party most inimical to the Medici, had filled the city with their insolence, and in professing to strike for liberty, had been the first to destroy it. Sensible men were aware that such was not the mode to attain to true freedom, but it did not comport with the spirit of the times to manifest anything like coldness, and men were often drawn by those more ultra than themselves into extreme and violent measures.

At this juncture, to prevent others from leaving the city, and cause the fugitives to return, all absentees were cited by public edict to present themselves to the magistrate within a specified time. Those who refused to obey this summons, were branded as rebels, and their property confiscated. Few, however, returned. A price was set upon the head of Baccio Valori, commissary for the Pope at the camp of Orange, as traitor to his country — one thousand florins if taken alive, five hundred if dead, were offered for his apprehension. Besides this, according to an ancient law against traitors, his family roll was *to be dishonored*, and torn from top to bottom.

Meantime, news from the camp came from time to time to the ears of the Pope, and learning that the country was devastated by incendiary fires, robberies and countless other calamities, he was, perhaps, confirmed in the opinion that the Florentines would be more tractable now that the army had penetrated into the heart of their territory, and he decided, before everything was utterly desolated, to send into Tuscany the Archbishop of Capua. He required him to pass through Florence, which was still open, under pretence of repairing to the camp of the Prince of Orange, and to ascertain himself if there was any way of inducing the Florentines to yield, before pushing matters any farther. The Archbishop came, and took lodgings near Agnolo della Casa, but a rumor soon arose among the people that he had come to corrupt the heads of the city. Four citizens were sent from the Signoria to inquire into the motives of his coming; he answered, that he was on his way to the camp, and was merely passing through Florence for his own convenience." He offered, at the same time, to mediate between the citizens and his Holiness. Contrary to the expectations of Clement, this offer was not accepted, and the Archbishop was escorted out of the Porta S. Niccolò, as far as the first outposts of the camp. The coming of the Archbishop increasing the suspicions against the Palleschi, both in the government, and among the people, a committee of six, together with the Gonfaloniere, were deputed to declare, who among the citizens were favorers of the Medici, or were suspected of being enemies to the state. Under this ordinance, many were seized and imprisoned in the Palazzo, where they remained under strict guard almost till the end of the siege. All the Spaniards residing in Florence, who were engaged in mercantile pursuits, were shut up in a house, and orders given that they should be strictly watched, that their wants should be cared for, but that they should not be allowed to converse with any one, or write anything except what pertained to their own private affairs. To this severity, which the circumstances of the city rendered excusable, were added others more cruel, and, indeed, out of all reason. Carlo Cocchi was beheaded for having let fall the remark that Florence *belonged* to the Medici, and, therefore, ought to accept them as sovereigns without waiting for war." Others were put to death on suspicion of having conspired with the Pope; and it is highly probable that many were innocent victims, or, at least deserving of milder treatment, as, too often, one injustice gives birth to many. But these unjust and violent measures, used by both parties every time they arrived in power, — measures which they fool-

ishly believed necessary to maintain that power, — were the very causes why neither party retained its ascendancy so long as the fate of Florence was not irrevocably fixed by foreign arms.

The army at last appeared in sight, and on the 14th October encamped on the plain of Ripoli, around the Convent del Paradiso. It is said that the Spanish soldiers, when they arrived at the Apparita, from whence they had a view of the whole city of Florence, cried out with unrepressed joy as they brandished their pikes in the air, “*Senora Florencia, apareja los brocados, qué venimos a comprarlos a medida de picas!*” *

On the 17th an entrenchment was made at Giramonte; on the 21st, the Prince established his camp on the hills that rise to the south of Florence, from the Porta S. Niccolò to that of S. Friano, and the morning after, Malatesta Baglioni, by order of the “*Ten of Liberty and Peace,*” presented himself at sunrise on the bastions of S. Miniato, accompanied by the captains and officers of the army, and followed by all the musicians of the city, and after long trumpeting and beating of tambours, he had all the artillery discharged, great and small, of which there were an immense number, as if to salute the enemy, or defy them to mortal combat. The tremendous reverberation shook the city and its walls, resounding on the hills and echoing in the vallies of Fiesole. The bastions were entirely wrapped in the smoke for several minutes, and now the Florentines knew that this so dreaded siege had actually commenced. This demonstration, made in accordance with the military custom of the time, produced, however, no real result. The following day, the first operations of the besiegers were directed against the campanile of S. Miniato, upon which was stationed a famous bombardier named Gio. d’Antonio, surnamed the Wolf, who, with two pieces of artillery, made serious havoc with the enemy. The Prince had four cannons of large calibre planted on the bastion of Giramonte, which battered this campanile for three successive days. These pieces were discharged twice in an hour, and to the gunners of the sixteenth century this appeared very rapid firing. The balls went sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, now high, now low, and if they sometimes struck the campanile, there was little harm done, for it was so far distant that they did little more than rip off the plastering from the walls. Nothing daunted, those within the walls, determined, as Varchi express-

* Mistress Florence, get the brocades ready, we’re coming to buy them, and we’ll measure them off on our pikes.”

es it, that "they who had come with so much presumption to take all Florence, should not take even one of its towers," protected the side exposed to the enemy with huge bales of wool, and the thing becoming matter of emulation with both sides, the Florentines one night bastioned the campanile so effectually, with a huge heap of earth, that the Imperialists were forced to give over the attempt.

They then planted a colubrina and took aim at the Palazzo de' Signori, but in discharging, the piece exploded, and the ball fell into the house of the executioner, upon which, Messer Silvestro Aldobrandini took occasion to make two sonnets, beginning "Povero campanile sventurato," and "Vanne Baccio Valor dal Padre Santo."

Several slight skirmishes took place in the early part of November, with unimportant results. The young men of the city went forth in haste to measure their strength with the enemy against whom they had conceived fresh animosity from a cause which vividly paints the customs of those times. The military art was then considered one with which no person had a right to interfere whose name was not on the army list, and registered according to certain rules. Those so entered, considered themselves members of the same confraternity, who, though enemies, were bound by certain mutual and reciprocal laws and duties. The consequence of this usage was, that the Imperial soldiers, most of them grown old in war, and matriculated, so to say, in their profession, looked with contempt upon the Florentines, who were usurping, so they said, the right of taking arms in defence of their country, nor would they ever fight honorably with them as with regular soldiers, for they said "they were no soldiers but gentlemen." Among the follies of human pride, this is not the least remarkable.

This treatment so incensed the Florentines, that they allowed themselves to be betrayed into many acts of cruelty; among others, Vincenzo Aldobrandini and Morticino degli Antinori, having taken prisoners two Spaniards, instead of accepting their ransom, put them to death.

The affairs of Florence were in this state on the day that Fra Giorgio issued from the convent, on his way to the house of Malatesta Baglioni.

CHAPTER VI.

THE city of Florence was at this time, as we have shown, admirably prepared for defence, its walls were strong, its troops numerous and well-disciplined, its treasury well-furnished, and the hearts of its citizens were kindled by ardent patriotism; but it was fostering a serpent in its bosom, and that serpent was Malatesta Baglioni. His ancestors had been prominent Ghibelline nobles of Perugia, of which province his father, Gian Paolo, was made Governor towards the end of the fifteenth century, and although he had twice been driven away, once by Cæsar Borgia and once by Julius II., he had afterwards succeeded in recovering his former authority. At last Leo X., wishing to re-unite Perugia to the states of the church, allured him with large promises and a safe conduct to Rome, where, instead of the friendly reception he had promised him, he caused him to be seized, put to torture and beheaded. The universal odium attached to this man for his many crimes, absolved Leo in the public mind for this breach of faith.

The principles of Malatesta were similar to those of his father. At first a condottiero in the service of the Venetians, then Governor of Perugia, at last, as we see, Captain-General of the Florentines, — a man of cold, crafty sagacity, and indefatigable pertinacity of purpose, proud, avaricious, implacable in vengeance, a master of stratagems and of the art of concealing and disguising them until ripe for effect, valiant and daring in person, and an accomplished general. He was in fact a type of those petty tyrants who, for centuries, rise, fall and reappear in almost all the Italian cities; now princes, now condottieri in the service of other princes, or of republics more powerful than themselves, leaders of parties, of refugees or robbers, accustomed to varied fortunes, and, in all, daring, restless and insatiable; men who, reared amid domestic infamy and civil strife, lived in a continual vicissitude of violence and cunning, and often ended their career, betrayed and ruined by *powerful and open enemies*, or perished under the knife of the

assassin, or of their nearest relatives. Thus to this time, more than to that of any other period, the lines of Juvenal seem applicable :

“ *Ad generum Cereris sine cæde et vulnere pauci
Descendunt reges et sicca morte tyranni.* ”

It would not seem that among such wretches there could be any true ideas of religion or of faith. Yet, in their way, they had both ; so true is it that Diogenes, in defining man to be “ a two-legged animal without feathers,” might have added “ or consistency,” for they built churches, supported mendicant friars, enriched sanctuaries, believed in God, in the gospel, in the Pope, and above all, and with the same kind of logic, in witchcraft, alchemy and astrology. Malatesta himself, lent blind faith to a Jewish astrologer called Master Barlaam, a native of Hungary, who, to a knowledge of the divinatory art, united that of medicine, and much skill in its practice. He lived at discretion in the house of Malatesta, at whose expense he was fast growing rich, — not that he actually robbed his patron, for he certainly earned a part of his gains by the care which his master's infirmities constantly demanded. That tremendous malady with which America has so fully avenged itself upon Europe, and which, in the sixteenth century, was rarely, if ever, cured, was slowly consuming Malatesta. He had received from nature a robust constitution, which easily sustained the fatigues and hardships of a military life, so long as the consequences of a dissolute course had not impaired his health and strength. He was formerly broad in shoulders and chest, of healthy, swarthy visage, with hair and beard black, short and curly, — in short, he was the very impersonation of vigor. To what a state his maladies had reduced him we shall soon see. The Serristori Palace, which he now occupied, was as now, though it is greatly changed, at the extremity of the Piazza, near the Ponte alle Grazie. The back part of the building looked upon the canal of the mill, and upon the Arno. On the morning which we have taken as a starting-point in our story, an hour before day, the whole palace was still, the great door closed, and the only postern gate lowered, before which was a soldier upon guard, with head, arms and chest encased in iron, wearing the loose trousers of those times, striped with red and black, and hose of the same colors. He bore on his shoulders a huge partisan, and was diligently pacing to and fro under the arch of the main entrance, stamping occasionally on the ground to warm his feet. The other men of the guard, *wrapped in their cloaks, were snoring in a corner, stretched on*



straw, beside a heap of ashes, and spent coals, the remains of the fire which had been burning during the night. On the first floor, the occupants were all likewise asleep. Malatesta alone had already been awake for some time. He was sitting up, on a couch of rectangular form, of dark wood inlaid with mosaic work. Its sides were divided into compartments, on each of which some mythological legend was represented in bas-relief. The cornices enclosing these designs, presented a curious and complicated intricacy of foliage, figures of animals, human heads, and almost every variety of arabesque. The couch stood on a platform raised about a hand's breadth from the floor. Beside the bed, on a small round table, supported by a curved and distorted figure of Atlas, was burning a lamp of silver, round which were flung in disorder, a very beautiful poignard, with its cord and tassels, rings and necklaces, a casket for relics, and one jewel of such strange appearance, that it was difficult to divine its use. It was a gem, round and flat like a coin, of the color of a ruby, in a setting of steel. By a point in the setting, likewise of steel, it was suspended by virtue of attraction, to a magnetic needle, which was fixed in the upper part of a circle, within which the gem remained in equilibrium. The circle was fixed upon a little pedestal of black wood, entirely covered with cabalistic signs. The room was decorated with hangings of leather; there were pictures upon the walls; the capacious arm-chairs were also of leather, well studded and fringed. Two huge mastiffs were snoring as they lay curled up in a corner.

The appearance of Malatesta was that of a disinterred corpse. His eyes and cheeks were hollow and sunken, his skin of a livid lead color, and his beard and hair, once so luxurious, now scanty and falling off. He wore over his shirt a doublet of red stuff, which, left open in front, exposed the gaunt chest, where the ribs might be counted. They were covered by nothing but the skin, which sunk between each rib in deep hollows. Dense, vitiated humors, had settled in his joints, and they had become so indurated and drawn up, as to restrain his motions, and render his arms nearly crippled.

He was slowly swallowing from a large cup which he had taken from the table beside him, some kind of decoction, eyeing at the same time with a sardonic grin a Frate who sat opposite him, a few steps from the bed. This friar wore the Franciscan habit, his capuche so concealing his face and eyes that nothing was visible but a little of the nose and a pair of well-fed vermillion cheeks. His beard was white and very long, covering mouth and chin, and tapering down to his very

girdle. His head was bent downwards, his chin resting on one hand, his breast seemed swollen with sighs, and he appeared absorbed in thoughts which agitated him powerfully. He murmured in a low tone, "It would be too base a deed! It would never be possible! — I cannot think of it!" — and he still kept his eyes fixed upon the ground. Had he raised them to Malatesta's face, and seen that diabolical smile, he would have felt disposed to flee. Better for him had he done so!

At last Baglioni said in a mocking tone, and with an air of nonchalance, "Say no more. The Signori Medici will not lack for men to do this little piece of service for them, without so much coaxing and so much childishness. Do you know it, eh? There are children of ten, twenty, fifty and even sixty years. Messer Baccio, who thinks so much of you, does not seem to know it, however. Go! go! there are enough who will set the ball in motion, if you will not. And when the "balls" shall again take their place over the great gate of the palace, there will be one to feast in the halls of the Medici, and be ready to bid them welcome; and this one shall receive rich rewards — he shall not lack for *horses*. Malatesta spoke slowly here, pronouncing each word with the greatest distinctness; nor dogs, nor falcons, nor rich clothes, nor gold, nor dances, nor pleasures; and if any one should be in the least ill-odor with them, the strangest whims may be gratified with impunity, and you will see it, and you will say, 'where this man is, I might have been!' I can tell you it will be no jest to you."

The Frate drew a long breath, his chest rose with sighs, but he remained silent.

"True it is," continued Malatesta, "that those things will be, and it will be better for you not to stay and see it, but to quit Florence at once. It will not suit the Signori Medici, that a man who knows so much of their affairs, and has resolved to serve them, should continue to eat bread."

At this moment, the clock of the tower of the Palazzo struck five. "Within an hour it will be day. Get you gone! Remember, if the devil tempt you to meddle any more in the affairs of state, that it is necessary to be a man and not a child, in setting about such business as this; and always remember, too, that this, here he touched his tongue with the end of his thumb, sometimes costs a man his head; and if anything *should* transpire of what has passed between us, I can know that the dogs have not flattered, and that you are not whom I shall have to do."

"But such a treachery!" said the Frate, speaking to himself.

"A treachery! a treachery!" repeated Malatesta, with his usual smile, "see who will be willing to go to the Eight with this announcement, "I would inform you that we decide to take the state, and give it up to the Medici; so keep good ward. I'm thinking that would be rather a fool-hardy proceeding!"

"But this unfortunate old man—the daughter—the family! —"

"Poh! do they belong to the Bardi, the Strozzi, the Frescobaldi? One would think they were some great family, that they must have so much respect. Are these proper considerations for a gentleman of your rank? When it concerns a matter of such importance that princes and lords stake their lives upon it, you stand here haggling with me about a paltry worker in silk, as if he were one of the kings of France!"

The Frate started up as if a spring had pushed him out of his chair. He approached the bed, took Malatesta's hand, pressed it, and said fiercely, "I will do all—but cursed be the hour on which I was born into the world!"

Malatesta laughed at this outbreak, and withdrawing his hand, said with an air of contempt, "Oh ho! so you have changed your notions? How many minutes will this resolution last?"

"For my misfortune, it will last but too long. And if I lose my life in the enterprise, so much the better for me."

"Now listen to me," said Malatesta, suddenly changing tone and manner, "as to that, whoever is unwilling to run any risk, had better stay in his nurse's go-cart, but whoever wants to get out of leading-strings and be something, and not waste his life in spinning wool and shearing cloth, must commit himself to fortune. Think you that the Medici will be willing to make you rich and great, because, when the time for action came, you stopped to consider? The choice rests with you. You know very well that this family have always rewarded those who have served them, as lavishly as they have dealt out vengeance upon their adversaries. And if its old supporters had possessed no more spirit than you, the Pallescan device might have been nailed up over the door of a manufactory, instead of flaunting on palaces and fortresses. The world belongs to him who takes it, and not to him who wavers between hopes and fears."

"Well, well! it shall be done; that is, if the opportunity presents itself, for at present I cannot see the way."

"Only think how delighted Niccolò would be to see his *Liza* married to one like you!"

"Niccolò? But do you know who Niccolò is? He would cut her throat with his own hands before he would give her to any other than a Popolano. To me then? To one of the Pallescan party? It is easily seen that your Magnificence does not know him. If Niccolò should know how things stand — who knows — but who would be hardy enough to tell him?"

"I understand you," answered Malatesta, "that must be thought of, but, in the meantime, begone, unless you would encounter daylight in the streets. You will say to Messer Baccio that I commend myself to him."

The Frate opened a little door, concealed by hangings of tapestry, and went out.

"This, then, is going on very well," said Malatesta, when he found himself alone, and he rubbed his hands together, as he always did when he was pleased. But the motion gave him such intense pain, he was forced to stop. A groan escaped him. He bit his lower lip and cursed his infirmities.

He called in a loud voice, "Barlaam! Barlaam!" A withered little old man appeared, with a face so full of wrinkles that it looked as if it were made of a skein of pack-thread, nose hooked and prominent, eyes like two pepper-corns, a mouth always smiling, but the smile never being accompanied by any appearance of pleasure in his eyes or in the rest of the face, seemed rather a convulsive spasm of the lips.

"I believe," said Malatesta, "that one-half of all this cursed wood* you have made me swallow for the last month would be enough to burn you alive, — and God knows if I should have been the worse for it."

"Your Magnificence," answered the old man, without being in the least discomposed, "would then have had one good and faithful servant the less."

"But you do not know, you enemy of Heaven, that I have not had an hour's rest for the night; that it seems as if needles were boring into the very marrow of my bones! Is it so difficult to find an herb, a powder, a *deril*, that could make me sleep one hour? By all that's holy, I cannot endure these torments always!"

"I will find this summer, the *celidonio*, a stone which is formed in the crop of the swallow, and your Magnificence will lay this stone in a napkin, and sew it to your shirt under the left breast, next the skin; or, if I could go into Dalmatia, there is a mountain —"

* The Holy Wood was the remedy most in use at this time for this disease.

"Better go to hell, — but I'm afraid I should get there before you then. I understand you. Come, set off, and call Messer Benedetto, and make haste."

The old man went out. Messer Benedetto de Nobili, doctor of laws, and a great friend of the Medici, often visited Malatesta, to confer with him upon the interests of the Pallescan party. He always came by night, taking all possible care that these visits should not be known at the palace, as at this time, it would have been deemed no slight crime to be found holding any intercourse with the enemy.

Messer Benedetto was a large old man, of a grave and imposing presence, but, in reality, base and malevolent, greedy of gain, a dissimulator, an ingenious caviller, and a consummate hypocrite.

He alone of the Pallescans held communication with Baglioni: and the greatest circumspection was necessary to prevent the Captain-General from falling under the suspicions of the people, which would have utterly ruined the hopes of the Medicean party.

While the Frate and Malatesta were holding the conversation quoted above, Messer Benedetto was waiting in a contiguous apartment. It may be asked, why was not he present at the conference to give his aid in the settlement of the bargain? But it was Malatesta's custom never to say in the presence of two what might as well be said to one.

Messer Benedetto entered, wrapped in the *lucco*, on his head the *cappuccio*. He seated himself leisurely in the great chair that had been occupied by the Frate, saying "So, then?"

"So, then, things are in an excellent train," answered Baglioni, "here is a letter from Messer Baccio?"

He took from beneath the bolster a note which the Frate had brought, sewed in the hem of his habit. It was in cipher. "This man is more disposed to talk than to act," said Malatesta with a ghastly grin.

He opened the paper and read the first part with that unintelligible murmur which one uses in passing over unimportant things, but arriving at what was of import, he read aloud.

"Talking yesterday morning with Troilo degli Ardinghelli, of the handsome women of Florence, he told me of a certain girl whom he had wooed and secretly married, (he himself will tell you how,) a daughter of Niccolò de Lapi. I immediately formed a design upon this Troilo, and as he has very elegant manners, and is one of the most agreeable and witty young men in Florence, I fully believe I shall be able to bring it about. If he can manage to introduce himself into Niccolò's

house, and induce him to receive him as a son-in-law, he knows so well what to do, that he could learn everything from them, and thus serve us marvellously during the siege, and after that, he can make these *mourners* mourn in good earnest. I did not open myself fully to the young man, because, having given him a distant hint of what I wanted, he seemed to show disapprobation. But he is a poor gentleman, and loves to spend and live like a prince. He is accustomed to pass his time in court among the *signori*, and cannot bear to have his boots soiled all day with the mud of the camp. There is nothing he would not do to get into favor with the Medici, and to be made use of by them. I have said more to your Magnificence than was necessary, for with your reputed authority and prudence, it will be very easy for you to influence him, &c. &c."

"Not a bad idea of the knave, eh?"

"Nay, excellent, if it only succeed. Oh! I know this young man, only by sight however; his ancestors are of S. Gimignano. I remember him when they were playing quintain before the great gate of the Palazzo Medici (he had a Turkish horse that went like a ray of light); he tilted with a grace I never saw equalled. He was beautiful as the sun then. Oh! his father was everything to Prince Julian, and if the son has not degenerated, he's Pallesean to the core! But how the devil has he managed to get into the family of this old serpent Niccolò?"

"Now I'll tell you, Messer Benedetto, only we must not spin out our stories till daylight, so that you will be seen coming hence. Troilo then saw this daughter of Niccolò, whose name is Liza, at a public fête, before the Medici went away. He ascertained who she was, and where she lived, and, in short, played his game so well that the girl fell in love with him. But in Florence there was no opportunity for their meetings. Niccolò went with his family to a farm he has near Poggio a Cajano. Troilo, who was then at Poggio, with Alessandro and Ippolito, not being able to bend Liza to his wishes, (for the girl was resolved upon an honorable marriage,) Troilo, I say, spoke of the affair to the Princes Medici, complaining of being mocked, and, as often happens among men, it became a matter of merriment, and the subject of a wager, and they arranged to play Niccolò and his daughter the most exquisite and amusing trick you ever heard of.

Troilo was to pretend to Liza that he was ready to marry her, but under the pretext that Niccolò would never consent to such a connection unless forced by necessity, to assure her that it must be done secretly. Liza reluctantly yielded to his persuasions. It was arranged that she should be very early in

the morning at a parish church about a mile from the Poggio, and this was cunningly planned at a time when Troilo knew the parish priest was away from home. There, a certain Michael, Troilo's groom, dressed in the habit of a priest, in surplice and stole, (Malatesta laughed louder and louder as he went on relating this disgraceful procedure, which appeared to him one of the finest jokes in the world,) performed the marriage service, with all the enjoined ceremonies. He! he! he! what a joke! It must have been an amusing scene. Those who were in the plot were ready to burst with laughter. But Lisa was satisfied, she was caught completely, and the Signori Medici had a great deal of merriment over it; they had it to laugh about for many a day — he! he! he!"

Messer Benedetto, perfidious by nature, and an enemy of Niccolò, for reasons that we shall soon understand, laughed also so immoderately, that his frame shook as if he was on a trotting horse. But when he heard that this deception had to do with things of the church, he writhed and said *no* with his head, though there was still a grin under his moustache. "Oh! oh!" said he at last, with an assumed air of seriousness, "but this is a little gross — a profanation! Like with like, says the proverb, but let holy things alone."

Malatesta gave a glance around the room to make sure there was no one there but themselves, then, turning to the doctor, he said, "Messer Benedetto, I would have you to know that we are all alone. Then don't play the Piagnone to me! With me, it is breath wasted. We know each other. If the devil should have to carry away one of us, he would be puzzled to know which was the worst of the two. When you are in the Piazza, you may play Fra Girolamo if you will, but here speak what you think."

Messer Benedetto was stung to the quick, but he merely said, "Very well," and then was silent.

"In fine," continued Malatesta, "Niccolò never knew anything of the marriage. Liza at length gave birth to a son, but with the aid of her sister, to whom the secret was imparted, when concealment was no longer possible, the affair was so covertly managed, that no one in the house suspected such a thing.

Troilo, in the meantime, in the expectation of war, had gone to unite himself to the Pallescans, and he has thought no more of Niccolò or his daughter, or anything of the sort. The boy, he says, must be in some house in Florence, but he does not know where. Now it is necessary to find the child, and *then let Niccolò know the whole. Piagnone, or not Piagnone,*

it is most likely he will be content to receive Troilo for a son-in-law, rather than have his daughter disgraced."

"And Troilo, is he disposed to lend himself to this business?"

"He was not willing, and began to pray excuse, but I ridiculed him, and convinced him that these *consciences* and these *faiths* are not the things to keep a man from starving. Eh! I can tell you, we can make something of him yet. The kittens of these days open their eyes betimes. Now then, there are two things to be done, and you are a Florentine, and are well acquainted with the place, and can very easily do it; and so it falls to you. See! First, to ascertain who has the child, and in what house he is kept. Second, to let Niccolò know the whole. Or, what if the child should be carried unexpectedly into the house?—what do you think of that? Oh! he would undoubtedly wish to cover the thing, and receive Troilo into favor; for if scandal should arise, he would make a terrible ado, he would load his daughter with opprobrious epithets, he would drive her from the house, and then Lisa would be obliged to have recourse to Troilo, and when the old man was calmed from his first fury, he would have to eat in our fashion, if he burst."

"Well, well, these things are easily managed, leave the care of them to me."

"Go now, for Heaven's sake, — it will strike seven in a moment. Courage! prudence! God help you!"

The two knaves separated, the doctor sneaked through certain by-ways into the street. Malatesta remained alone with his pains, and perhaps with the horrid joy of having provided worse agonies for so many unfortunates.

CHAPTER VII.

THE hall in which Malatesta was accustomed to hold his councils and receive his visitors, which we will call the reception room, was a very large apartment on the street, ornamented with paintings in fresco by Francia and Pietro Perugino. It was lighted by six windows, under the parapet of each of which projected, on both sides, two seats of brick, covered with a broad flat stone of marble. In the centre of the partition wall, at the back part of the room, was a kind of plinth or basement of wood, in which was fixed the banner of Malatesta, on both sides of which were disposed as trophies, many of his weapons, remarkable for their exquisite temper, and their extreme lightness, — a necessary quality for the use of one so disabled by his infirmities.

Every morning at sunrise, each captain of the guard stationed at the city gates, sent one of his officials to Malatesta to report to him anything that might have occurred during the night, and receive the orders for the day. These men were now waiting in the antechamber, and as a firing from the camp commenced just at this time, they were all looking out of the window which commands the Ponte alle Grazie, and discussing among themselves the cause of the commotion. Knowing that if it were anything of importance, a messenger would soon arrive to announce the fact, they directed their attention now to the quarter of S. Niccolò, now to the Ponte, to see if any courier appeared. But along the whole extent of the Piazza, as far as the eye could reach, not a living creature was to be seen. It was raining, and what with the weather, the solitude, the tediousness of being kept in waiting, and the deep and distant muttering of the artillery, it was one of those half-hours that fill people with gloom and *ennui*.

All at once, behold! coming from the Ponte alle Grazie, a Frate of S. Marco, whose rapid strides through the mud, seemed very little impeded by the garb he wore.

Soldiers of all times and all nations, have (at least so we believe) always shown a decided turn for jeering at their

neighbors. But as a sarcasm among them usually costs a sword-thrust, they generally look to that before they speak; but if they happen to meet one who cannot or will not defend himself, then they give free scope to their witticisms. So little truth is there in the assertion, that man is by nature a generous animal!

This poor Frate then, was no sooner descried than all began to laugh and crow. "There's the news! There's the courier! Look at the courier of the excommunication!"

On came the Frate, but when he arrived under the window, and instead of passing on as they had expected, entered the great gate, the mirth increased, and they thought that to while away the time, and beguile the tedium of waiting for Malatesta, they would have a little sport at the expense of this Frate. But the Frate could maintain his ground against the whole of them, for he was no other than our friend Fanfulla. He entered the court-yard and seeing stable-boys currying horses under the portico, soldiers here, pikes and arquebuses there, he felt his heart expand, as it were, on breathing this military atmosphere. He had indeed heard some laughing behind his back, and some jests upon his monk's dress had reached his ear, but at this moment, satisfied as he was, and being full of his design, he would not have turned round if a rock had exploded at his back. It seems that he had lost no time in going along, but had busied himself on the way in combining and arranging a piece of eloquence by which he intended to distinguish himself, and worthily present his request to the Captain of the Florentines, — and he was too much engrossed with this to attend to anything else. Since we are upon this topic, we may as well inform the reader that Fanfulla, like many other clever men, was subject to that fatality which leads them to make little pretension to the things they do know, and much to those that they do not know. So that he, who was merely a good soldier, assumed to be a fine speaker: for, during his conventual life, by means of hearing sermons, reading books on different subjects, and conversing with the monks and others whom he met in the convent, he had furnished his memory with some hundreds of phrases, sentences and finely-rounded periods, but it was furnished, be it understood, like the shop of a huckster or a pawnbroker. He mounted the stairs, entered the antechamber, and, approaching the usher, said, "If you please, when it is convenient, I should like to say a word to His Magnificence."

"Your name?"

"*Fra Giorgio da Lodi, of S. Marco.*"

"Wait. But I can tell you it will be some time first; you see how many people there are in the antechamber."

Without replying, Fanfulla seated himself beside a table, and leaning one arm upon it, stretching out his legs, and making a slight fidgety motion with the points of his toes, with chin in air, without so much as a look at any one else, remained completely absorbed in the thoughts of his harangue. He was not altogether dissatisfied with the mode in which he had framed it, but he would have been glad to introduce into it some scrap of philosophy, as it is said Cellini did in talking to Paul III. on the mode of tinging a diamond. Every one may judge how seasonably philosophy could come in in either case, particularly in that of Fanfulla, who was striving to get hold of some idea of physics, true or false it mattered not, and some crotchet of astrology.

While he was thus engaged, the officials who had first looked out, had turned their backs to the windows, and eyeing the Frate sharply, and finding him a very different person from what they had expected to see, they turned to one another with surprise. "What think you," said one, "of the face of this servant of God? It would not look ill on the neck of a he-goat."

"The devil!" said another, "one eye gone, and a deep cut in the face! It must be that when they've had to choose a prior, they've sent the porringers flying at each other's heads, these reverends!"

"He must have had a fight with the cat in the garret!"

"Or fallen down the cellar stairs!"

"Or perhaps he thought some husband would shut an eye, and the husband, instead, closed one of his!"

And in uttering these jests, accompanied with much loud laughter, every eye was fixed on Fanfulla. For some time he paid no attention to all this; for, engrossed in thoughts that completely occupied him, and not at all used to being ridiculed, he never suspected that any one would have the hardihood to do such a thing. But at last his suspicions were aroused, and listening for a moment, he became aware that he himself was the object of ridicule: for, turning his eye around, he observed that there was no other Frate in the apartment, and he instantly felt that peculiar movement of the pericardium, which one experiences when the temper rises. But, fresh from the sermon of Fra Benedetto, and armed with the resolution not to return to his old ways, he said in his heart, though he still felt somewhat angry, as he drew his legs up under *his tunic*, "Take care, Fanfulla, don't begin your old tricks

again!" and casting down his eyes, he endeavored to assume an air of modesty, that consorted about as well with his face as the whiskers of a grenadier would have suited the face of one of Raphael's Madonnas.

The mockery, the jesting, the laughter went on. Fanfulla's outer man betrayed no sign of emotion, save a frequent agitation of the knee, which went up and down with the motion of a trotting ass, but within the blood was boiling.

Over his head, fixed in the wall about five cubits from the ground, was one of those clocks that are moved by counter-weights, and these were hanging exactly four inches from Fanfulla's nose. He cast a longing eye at them, like a school-boy at a bunch of grapes beyond his reach, and muttered between his teeth, "See now if even these weights do not come under my hand, just out of spite, and mock me, now that they know I've become religious and cannot use them. I only wish it were ten years ago, my dear jokers, you would see if I wouldn't send a couple of them at your heads to teach you better manners." And while with a sigh he thought how difficult it was for him to be a saint, his hand, almost of its own accord, was raised towards those excellent cylinders of lead, that would have served him so admirably for projectiles in such a case, and he caught them, turning them between his fingers. What a temptation! But let not the reader be alarmed. Fanfulla came off victor. His adversaries meantime, emboldened by his silence, continued their attacks. The thing began to savour of indiscretion. A slender, beardless soldier-lad began to make his remarks on the eye of the Friar, who, seeing himself peered by a fool of this sort, could not swallow it. He started upon his feet: he was again the Fanfulla of old, and, moving slowly towards the group of officials, said with the air of a man who has a full purse, "You ought to remember, my dear sirs, the good old proverb, 'every good game lasts but little while,' and if I mistake not, this has lasted long enough. And you, my fine lad," turning to the youth who had spoken last, "you had better try to make a more strengthening living, and fill out your skin with some of the good things of this life: for it is too ridiculous to attempt to play the soldier with those shoulders of yours that look for all the world like a clothes-horse, for I declare I can scarcely see you, you are so thin and transparent: and as for the rest of you, I would have you to know that this eye was destroyed by the point of a Spanish pike at the battle of Ravenna, when the news was carrying you in her arms. This cut that I carry on my face, I received *in defending that brave lord of the French King at*

the battle of Pavia, when the nurse was giving you the breast, and dandling you on her knees; these two fingers were sown at Marignano, by the two-handed sword of a Swiss of Unterwald, when the nurse"—but for brevity's sake, we will omit what further Fanfulla had to say about the poor nurse.

"Now," he continued "not to keep you in suspense, I will tell you, round as the mouth of a well, that if I were not a friar, but were what I once was, I would before this, have called you out before the door, to say a little word to you, after the manner of soldiers: but as I have this tunic on, at least for the present, I beg you to have the courtesy to allow me to attend to my own business, for I am not used to be the butt of the company, and as for my *pazienza*,* it is only beneath my tunic."

At this long reprimand, the company, and the youth especially, looked foolish and embarrassed as is always the case with those who attempt to ridicule, and find themselves the only ridiculous ones. However, they took the part which every one who has a particle of sense must take in such a case, they owned their blunder, excusing themselves in the best way they could, and the only one among them who had not spoken all this time, and who was a man quite advanced in years, said smiling, "When I was with the Spaniards, I learned the proverb, 'Tal cree tosar, y vuelve trasquilado' (some go out to shear, and come back shorn.)" With this jest, the affair passed off with a laugh. But great was the curiosity which this mistake awakened in all present, to know more of the history of so strange a man.

They begged him courteously to inform them who he was, and those who had been in the battles he had mentioned, crowded around him and eagerly importuned him to do so. Fanfulla, like all old men that have passed through a great deal in their lives, loved dearly to tell stories about himself; so without further urging, he told them who he was, who his parents were, and after mentioning his real name, he said, "however, among the soldiers I was always called Fanfulla."

A general exclamation of surprise and delight now burst forth, for at this time, the very children knew of the famous challenge so triumphantly fought by the Italians, twenty-six years before, and they knew by name those among the combatants who were held in the highest honor among the soldiers themselves. Among the corporals who were now present, there was one who had fought in the Spanish army under Gonsalvo,

* The scapulary was then called *la pazienza* (patience.)

and had been an eye-witness of the encounter at Barletta: his name was Boscherino. He opened his arms wide, and threw them around Fanfulla's neck, saying: "And who the devil would ever have recognized you in this sheath of black and white? Fanfulla a Frate! Oh! oh! oh! before I die, I may expect to see the Sultan a Cardinal. But have patience — let them talk, you would look far better with the dagger at your side. And so you did not recognize me? It is easily seen that my hair is changed, if not my skin. Don't you remember Boscherino? We have both grown old, but our legs carry us yet."

"They carry us rather too well, at least, I can say that for myself," answered Fanfulla, recognizing his old comrade with evident pleasure, "if mine did not carry me so well, I could have remained quiet and content in the convent. When I entered it two years ago, I thought that my military propensities were completely crushed, for with such wretched health, and above all, that horrible sacking of Rome, I felt broken like the trunk of a cracked lance—but what would you? With two years of quiet, and every day open table, I am as lusty as ever."

And here commenced between the two friends a dialogue so full of "you remember *this*, and you remember *that*," that it seemed as if there were no end to it. At last Boscherino said, after having brought up many old comrades, "And that poor Ettore, — you remember him? That sad fool thought he was living in the time of Tristano and Queen Isotta! — and then to come to such an end! but indeed it is looking for him with a lantern. He wouldn't drink, do you think? When I saw that hangman's face of his, I said to him, come Ettore, let's go to — to — what the devil was the name of the host of the Sun? Ah! I remember, Arsenico. Let's go to Arsenico's, I said to him, — he had a kind of wine that was delicious, it was enough to crack a whip. And if you don't drink, — I give you fair warning — and you needn't doubt, I did not mean to be made a liar. But what am I talking about? You were in the same company with him, you know —"

"I know but too well," interrupted Fanfulla, resuming his downy air, while an expression of remorse overshadowed his countenance, "do not talk to me of that — I, madman that I was, was the cause of all the mischief — I misled that poor wretch!"

"How? how?" asked Boscherino eagerly.

"Oh, as to the *how*," answered the other, "I have already

told you, I do not wish to talk of that. Bygones are bygones, and there is no remedy."

"Let it be as if unsaid," answered Boscherino smiling, though a little vexed, "but we may speak of that beautiful Saracen woman, may we not? What was the name of that beautiful Moor, with the shawl twisted about her head?"

"Zoraide," said Fanfulla, "as to her, I will tell you enough to satisfy you. You remember the beginning of the pontificate of Julius II. when Valentine was entertained at the castle? Well, at that time" — but here the usher made a sign to Fanfulla, who, engrossed in his narrative did not observe him, so he approached and pulling him by the sleeve, and raising the tapestry which hung over the door of Malatesta's apartment, said, "Enter Fra Giorgio." The summons was an unlucky one for two reasons: Boscherino and his companions were left in ignorance of the fate of Zoraide, and as for the good Fanfulla, the dispute he just had with the officers, and the subsequent conversation, had driven his intended speech to Malatesta, entirely out of his head, and he had no time to settle his ideas and arrange them in proper order. Brought so unexpectedly into the presence of the Captain-General, he was precisely in the predicament of a coachman, who driving four spirited ponies, either through sleepiness or negligence, leaves the reins on their necks, but when, by some accident, they get excited and break into a run, some half minutes elapse before he can get hold of his curb, and bring the bits into play, and in the confusion he pulls the wrong rein, and if good luck does not aid him he is sure of getting his neck broken.

But Fanfulla now realized that great good-luck is rare. Feeling that his elaborate address was utterly ruined, he was in the situation of a disarmed man, advancing to meet the foe. However, making a virtue of necessity and without quite losing his presence of mind, he saluted Malatesta in an obsequious but tolerably self-possessed manner, and coughing a little to gain time, he said:

"Magnificent Captain, if I have taken the trouble to come here — or rather, I would say, if I have come here to trouble you, it is through a desire, which may appear to you incompatible with the dress I wear; but if what the astrologers affirm is true, that man cannot resist the influence with which the stars, or we will say the planets, rule him from his birth, and control by immutable laws the acts and operations of his life, — or as the philosophers and physicians teach, that no good can come from yoking the lion with the lamb; that every *animal has his own peculiar instincts*; that it is the height of

folly to attempt to make him go contrary to his nature, and he who thinks otherwise, 'sets the green goose to watch the lettuce,' as the vulgar say, and for this reason, as I was saying, I have come, — knowing that I am still able, thanks to my robust constitution, to exercise this art, to which alone heaven has inclined me — and seeing the necessity that in this extremity, the city has of men of our profession, — for of this sad profession, though some may be found more expert than myself, there are none who have exercised it with greater fidelity — and perhaps, if I were not afraid of wearying you, I could prove to you, that as to experience — I could relate to you —"

Malatesta had listened to Fanfulla, and, in fact, had given him audience before many others in waiting, out of deference to his habit of S. Marco, because, at this time, in Florence it was necessary to pay much respect to that convent; but the singular appearance of the monk made him think he was dreaming, and this strange rhodomontade confirming him in his suspicions, he had not patience to hear him out, and to get rid of him, he interrupted him, saying in tones of much less courtesy than his words expressed:

"As you are of S. Marco, I would willingly do what I can for you — if, however, I could ascertain what you wish — what is this art of yours, you have been talking about? Perhaps you are the father-surgeon of the convent, and wish to exercise of your skill, in healing our wounded? If so, I will be obliged of your services."

"Novelty and stands me to-day," muttered Fanfulla privately between his teeth. Then he said aloud, "I will serve you well, if you are willing, but to give wounds and not to heal them; and to conclude, in one word, know, your Magnificence, that I am Fra Giorgio of Lodi now, but that I was once Fanfulla of Lodi, and that I am to become the same again, if you are willing to accept my services, and I hope to live yet at least two years of convent life: I have not changed me so much that I am not good for something yet, and here is a paper from his bosom is a certificate from Senior Brother Cosimo, in which I think your Magnificence does not need my name for the first time."

Malatesta exclaimed, laughing, "Oh, you knave! why did you not say so at first, without so bewildering me with your notions about physics and astrology and what not, that I took you for a preacher. Well, if it be so, and you are disposed to resume the lance, I willingly receive you, and will do my best for your *promotion*; and now I think of it, I believe you

are altogether in the right, for, from what I have heard of you, I think you will succeed much better as a soldier than as a preacher." He then read the recommendation of Prospero, and returning it to Fanfulla, he said, "this was not necessary; without this, I know you to be a brave fellow." Malatesta, struck by the novelty of the case, wished, however, to know by what freak of fortune so renowned a soldier had been led to turn Friar, and Fanfulla very willingly satisfied him. After hearing the whole story, he turned to Amico d'Arsoli, leader of one of the horse-troops in the service of the Florentines, who was present, with other officers, saying to him, "I desire you to take this man into your company."

"But apropos, Fanfulla, how are you as to arms, and especially as to horse? You would not like to begin service now on foot I suppose?"

"As to arms," said Fanfulla, "I am very well off, but as to horse, I am, to tell the truth, rather in the back-ground, but please God, it may happen, seeing we are face to face with these Germans without, that I may provide myself with a better, and will pay for it with the point of my lance."

"In God's name," answered Malatesta. "At any rate, you'll have to pay for what you need very soon; now go get your arms and return, for I shall soon give you all something to do."

Fanfulla, almost beside himself for joy, went out, and was at the convent in a very short space of time. There the news had already spread that *Fra Bombardo*, as they called him, was going away, and all knowing the cause of his departure, a large number of the monks and lay-brothers had assembled in the monastery, curious to see him depart, transformed into a soldier. Immediately upon his arrival, he saddled his horse and led him out into the court-yard, then he went up into his cell, where he put on his armor and girded on his weapons, throwing over his corslet in the fashion of a trooper's cloak, the *pazienza* of black serge of the order of St. Dominick, which, with his sword belt, he confined around his waist. To preserve as far as possible the habits of the monk, he took down his rosary and hung it to one of the largest daggers he wore on his right side, and in this array, he proceeded to the cell of *Fra Benedetto*, as he did not think it proper to go away without formal leave. He listened modestly to the last admonitions of the good father, kissed his hand at parting, and descended into the court, where he found the monks waiting to bid him farewell. He saluted some, embraced others, and shook hands with several, (and these were not the most fortunate, for what

with his great strength, and what with his iron gauntlets, it was about the same thing as putting one's hand into a vice,) and then mounted his horse. But if he supposed that his horse had recovered his old martial spirit, he was doomed to find himself mistaken. In former times, there was no way of making him stand quietly, and he no sooner felt his rider in the saddle, than he was off like a bolt of lightning. Now, on the contrary, he suffered his master to mount at his leisure, without making other motion than to settle down slowly to the left side, where he felt the weight. A couple of sharp pricks of the spur were necessary to make him move at all, and several more decided ones to induce him to take the direction of the great gate which led into the street, instead of returning to his stable, as he was disposed to do; and he obstinately refused to obey the bridle which turned his head in a different direction. However, by skilfully plying whip, spur and bridle, Fanfulla managed to get him through the great gate, and they went on their way, Fanfulla still pricking his breast, turning in his saddle, saluting and saluted, as long as he could see and be seen.

Not long after this, he was going the rounds of Florence, about eleven o'clock in the evening, at the head of six halbarders, examining and reconnoitring all the streets and lanes of the quarter of S. Giovanni, performing what is now called the patrol, but which was then distinguished by another name. It was bad weather such as we often have in Florence in November, — cold, windy, and raining in torrents. Fanfulla cared not a whit for the weather, and to occupy his men, who were raw recruits, and thinking besides that it might do them some good, he made them tell their beads as they went along. He took the lead, and they followed in single file, close to the wall, to shelter themselves a little from the rain. Let not the reader suppose, however, that the soldiers of these times were much given to devotional exercises, since Fanfulla's companions only said their prayers through fear of the handle of a great partisan which he carried on his shoulder, and with which he had already threatened to pommel the shoulders of one of them who had attempted to play *l'esprit fort*. Persuaded then, by this argument, which, if the rules of versification had permitted it, might well have been included in that famous line in the treatise on logic, "*Barbara, celarent, dario, ferio baralip-ton*," they had already marched an hour, suffering all the discomforts which may be imagined under such circumstances.

At last, as they turned the corner of Or S. Michele to pass through *Porta Rossa*, they saw by the light of the torch they

carried, something on the ground close to the wall, that looked like a bundle of clothes; and, approaching and examining it attentively, they perceived that it was a woman in a crouching posture: to defend herself from the rain, she had drawn her gown over her head. The garment was so soaked with rain and bespattered with mud, that it was evident she had been there some time. Had she been lying on the ground, they would have supposed her the victim of some violence, but she was sitting up.

"What the devil!—what the deuce can this be!" said Fanfulla, stopping with his men to look at her.

"Some escaped mad-woman," said one.

"She looks like a figure in Dante's *Inferno*," said one who wished to make a display of his learning.

"If it were S. Giovanni's night," added a third, one might think it was — that it might be a —

"Yes, a witch indeed," interrupted *l'esprit fort* of the company, smiling contemptuously, "don't you see she has not the goat's foot, ignoramus?"

"Let's see, at any rate," said Fanfulla, and coming close to her, he called out, "Here! young woman! hallo! young woman! I say, lady! hallo!"

But she moved not. He repeated the call two or three times, then pulling away the garment that concealed her, he took her by the arm and shook her; slowly raising her head she showed a face that must have been beautiful, though, at this moment, it was sharp and livid as that of a corpse. Her eyes wide open, but strained and dim, fastened themselves upon the bystanders without seeming to see them. She held in her lap a young infant wrapped in a blanket; it was sleeping quietly its round rosy cheeks telling of health and comfort, for its mother, by making a roof over it with her arms and her head had succeeded in protecting the boy completely from the cold and rain.

All at once, the poor creature seemed to rouse from her stupor, as if awaking from a trance. She started, and her first movement was to press her infant to her breast, and cover it again with her clothes and her hands, while Fanfulla said to her:

"What the deuce are you doing here at this hour, in this condition. Come, rise up! What is the matter with you? What has happened to you? Tell us where your home is, and we'll take you there."

"Where is my home?" said the young woman, bursting into tears, "I no longer have a home,—look, this mud is

my home,—these skies are my roof—this is the cradle of my poor unfortunate child, —” as she said this, she imprinted such despairing kisses upon its lips that it awoke, and began to cry.

“ You’ve done well, to wake up that poor innocent, and set it a crying, that has done nobody any harm,” said Fanfulla, who really had a good heart, as, by a singular caprice of nature, the whole race of brave men have, how rough soever they may be in their manners; “ but have you no relations? husband? father. You have a mother, at least. Badly off as we may be, we all have, or had a mother, if nothing else.”

But the woman wept more violently than ever, without making any reply.

“ Well, at all events,” said Fanfulla, “ it will not do to stay here and cry and be discouraged; it is night, it rains, and the weather is very cold, and this child will never live here till morning, so come away from this place, and when you are under shelter, we’ll hear your story; come, let’s go!”

And with kindly words, using at the same time a little gentle force, he raised the young woman from the ground, and led her along slowly, supporting and encouraging her, and at last carrying the child for her, (it was a strange sight, that old soldier acting the nurse’s part,) until they reached the Palazzo de’ Signori, where, in the lowest room occupied by the guard of the principal gate, it did not at least rain, and a good fire was burning.

Here, gradually warmed, dried and somewhat restored, the lady began her story. At first she seemed to be laboring under feelings of mingled fear and distrust, seeing a great number of soldiers around her, who stared at her without ceremony, and made whatever observations they pleased upon her; but Fanfulla, seeing that their scrutiny and unfeeling remarks gave her pain, made them retire into another room, partly by words, partly by pretended anger, and by threatening to make use of that argument to which we have already alluded, which the masters of logic have omitted to mention. He felt, he hardly knew why, a deep interest in this unknown female, and there was nothing he would not do for her. She herself, somewhat reassured and encouraged by the goodness of heart which betrayed itself through his rough but well-meant expressions, was persuaded to open to him her heart and relate her tale of sorrow. But, as her recital, from the agitation of her mind and the confusion of her thoughts, was necessarily broken and disconnected, we will omit her version of it; and in order that the

reader may know who it was, and how she came in this plight, we will go back a little in our story and mention some particulars connected with the family of Niccolò, which we have not, until now, been able to find a place in story.

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reader may know who it was, and how she came in this plight, we will go back a little in our story and run over some particulars connected with the family of Niccolò, which we have not, until now, been able to find a place in story.

CHAPTER VIII.

OPPOSITE the little side-gate of S. Maria Maggiore, is now to be seen a house of the insipid and characterless architecture of the nineteenth century, which, after having been the Inn of the "Aquila nera" (black eagle), is now designated "La Nuova Yorck." On this same area, occupied previously by the Seminario, and in part, at a still earlier period, by the houses of the Cerretani, stood, at the time of which we write, the dwelling of Niccolò, built in the latter part of the fourteenth century, and similar to those of that time, which still remain in Florence. Would that they might be preserved a little while longer, and not fall into the hands of those householders who, to increase their rents, make one room into four, cut windows, white-wash the front, and — but let us leave this topic, as it is unpleasant to talk of taste, of past memories, or of architecture, in connection with those who care for nothing but money.

The house where lived the family of the Lapi (separated from the Carnesecchi by the Via de' Conti) was square, strong and massive, three stories high, of hewn stone blackened by time, above which the walls were covered with arabesques, painted in fresco, and on the top of the building was an open gallery supported by light columns. The roof projected several feet in front, and the beams which supported it, extending beyond the wall, had the appearance of huge brackets, coarsely ornamented with some kind of carving.

The windows of the lower floor, perhaps, because a little too accessible from the street, were furnished with stout iron gratings. Under the windows was a stone bench, extending along the whole front, and in this bench, between the joints of the stones of which it was composed, at the height of about ten feet, were inserted plates of iron, turned upwards, with a socket at top, in which were planted on festal occasions, torches or banners, and from which hung a huge ring. On the corner of the *palazzo*, at the same height, was one of those iron lanterns still to be seen on the angles of the Palazzo Strozzi.

the work of Il Caparra. On the hall-door, which was in the centre of the house, were two enormous bronze knockers, formed of rings which hung from the mouths of two lion's heads; and judging from the manner in which the shutters were fortified with nails and slates, one might suppose that to nightly depredators, a visit to that house might not prove an unprofitable one. The house was entered through a wide hall, whose vaulted roof was divided into compartments in fresco. This led to a quadrangular court-yard, around which, under a light, tasteful portico, were seen many historical designs, also in fresco, of the epoch and school of Masaccio. About mid-way in the above-mentioned entry, two doors gave access to the lower floor, which, at the left hand, led to four rooms, where Niccolò had his manufactory and counting-room, and where with his young men he superintended his business; the other, to the right, served for entrance to his own apartment, which he had chosen, because to his old age, though still green, the labor of going up and down stairs was already burdensome. The first floor was occupied by his sons, the upper story by his daughters and their women, who were thus in a place of greater security and wholly separated from the rest of the house.

The apartment of the old man, (a truce to descriptions, the reader will say, but how can a group of figures be painted without a little back-ground?) — this apartment, then, was in all respects appropriate to the person who inhabited it; that is, it was of a grave and severe style. Hung with a Flemish tapestry representing several scenes from the Bible, with an entablature of dark wood, the furniture scanty, consisting of a bedstead of polished walnut wood, its canopy of purple calimanco, supported by four small posts, which rested on a kind of box surrounding the bed as a zoele or pediment, and which served as a step for ascending it; two large coffers of wood, carved in bas-relief, (Niccolò's wife had brought them to the house when she came there a bride, — they had contained the *corredo*, that is, the bride's outfit) and several arm-chairs covered with purple leather, studded with brass nails. In the wall beside the bed was a niche, about four feet high, in which hung a Dominican habit, under which stood an urn of silver, of basket form, and before which a burning lamp was suspended by a chain from the ceiling. The monastic habit was the last ever worn by Fra Girolamo Savonarola, (whose portrait, enclosed in a frame of ebony, was hanging near,) and was taken from him at the time of his martyrdom, and the urn contained the ashes gathered from his funeral pile. These things, which Niccolò regarded as relics of a martyr, and memorials of a

teacher and a friend, were preserved by him with the highest and tenderest veneration.

A few days after the funeral of Baccio, Niccolò was sitting after supper, as was his custom at twilight, under the brow of a big chimney, in which a good fire was burning. He had around him all his household, and several of the most influential men of the time in Florence, who often passed their evenings with him, — drawn thither not on official business, but solely by the affection they bore him, the high estimation in which they held his experience in affairs of state, and his authority in the party of the Piagnoni, of which he might be called the head and soul.

There was present at this time, Bernardo da Castiglione, father of Dante, an intense hater of the Pallescan name, and one of the most reputed of his party, which was that of the Popolani, who desired a democracy in its most extended sense, and were, consequently, opposed to the Ottimati, of whom, as we have already said, Gonfaloniere Niccolò Capponi was the head.

There were also two Dominican frati, Fra Benedetto da Fiesole, whom we have found Superior of S. Marco, — a very learned man, of vast acquirements, whether in theological matters, or in Greek and Latin literature, but by nature much too timid for those times of bold and tremendous counsels, — and Fra Zaccaria da Fivizzano di S. Maria Novella, an eloquent preacher and a zealous agitator of the people, whom he stirred up to defend their liberties, with all the forcible and fascinating eloquence of a Savonarola. There, too, was Francesco Ferruccio, a merchant turned soldier, a man who might be said to be true steel, body and soul, one of those who may be killed, but not conquered, who yield to no man; one of those who are sufficient of themselves to avert the ruin of a state; an intrepid soldier, an experienced commander, happy in his manners, but rigid in discipline, and inflexible with his soldiers, who, nevertheless loved him, knowing him to be at once just and generous; a perfect utterer of the maxims and school of Giovanni de' Medici, Captain of the Band Nera, whom he so studied to imitate, that his men used to say he tried to be too much of a Signor Giovanni, so much virtue, we are obliged to confess, being stained by some acts of cruelty; but we must remember, that he lived in the sixteenth century, that he loved his country, that he was forced to witness its long and painful agony, and to see its inevitable ruin!

Bernardo, seated at the side of Niccolò, was talking to him in a low voice, and seemed to be sending some urgent word of importance. Fra Benedetto, with a thoughtful air, turning to the fire, *now the palm, now the back of his hand*, stood near;

and on his right, continuing the semi-circle around the chimney, was Fra Zaccaria, his piercing black eyes, chiselled like those of the Olympic Jove of Phidias, were fixed on high, his long thick beard giving him the lofty and inspired air of the Moses of Michael Angelo. Francesco Ferruccio stood in the midst, with his back to the fire; his shadow, vacillating with the flickering flames, was thrown on the opposite wall, where his tall, robust figure was delineated in gigantic proportions. At the other side of the room, in great arm-chairs into which they had flung themselves, weary with the fatigues of the day, were Averardo and Vieri, Niccolò's sons, still in armor; Bindo was standing at a table where Laudomia and Liza were busied in preparing lint, and sewing bandages for wounds; he held in his hand a helmet which he had just done furbishing, and secretly glancing at his father to see if he was observing him, was teasing Laudomia to get him a couple of plumes for a crest. The young girl, shaking her head with a sad smile, motioned to him to be silent. Perhaps the sight of the good sword of Baccio at the boy's side, reminded her of her slaughtered brother; perhaps she was occupied with thoughts still more painful and distressing on account of her ill-advised and unhappy sister.

Liza was a year younger than her sister; she was eighteen. Both maidens might be said to be beautiful, but at first sight, any one would have taken Laudomia for the younger of the two. On her modest, pensive face, in the slow and gentle movements of her azure eyes, and even in tones and gestures, shone a something so chaste and virginal, which every eye discerned, every heart felt, and which it is impossible to describe; which, without being proper to one age more than any other, without belonging exclusively to any state or condition of life, often adorns the countenance of the mother of many children, and is often looked for in vain on that of a young girl; that certain something which seems to be the soul's beauty piercing through its transparent corporeal veil; that something, wholly distinct from personal beauty, always, however, rendering beauty of person irresistible and divine, and compensating with usury for the absence of it; that, in fine, which atones for the vicissitudes of fortune, rendering august and honorable, the most humble and obscure poverty. This halo, radiating from a mind uncontaminated by a guilty thought, gave to the countenance of Laudomia an angelic expression with which her life had ever been in beautiful harmony. Left motherless at the age of fifteen, she had, with premature judgment, realized that she must take the place of a mother to her younger sister and she

had now for several years assumed and faithfully discharged that responsibility.

To the rest of the family, she was the pivot, so to say, on which turned the whole domestic machinery. Whenever there was any dispute in the family, Laudomia with a timely word, fitly spoken, quieted the matter, or turned it with a smile; if any one was in trouble, he or she came at once to Laudomia, and with her loving ways, she seemed to make the case her own, condoling with the afflicted, but always suggesting some remedy or some consolation. Was there anything of moment to be decided, Niccolò listened to her sooner than to any one else; while she, speaking timidly, and with diffidence of herself, but with sound judgment, and a quick perception, was almost always happy enough to point out the proper course. In fact, at home or abroad, among her friends and neighbors, she was always called "the angel of the Lapi."

About two years before the time of which we are writing, she had observed a young man in the rich costume of the upper class, who passed almost every day under her windows, sometimes alone, sometimes with his friends, often mounted on a Spanish jennet which he managed admirably, and she had said to Lisa, who was sewing beside her, "What a handsome young man!" but without thinking anything more of the matter, than it she had said, "What a beautiful flower!" Whenever he passed, she took pleasure in looking at him, without suspecting any harm, just as she would have looked at a young girl of similar beauty.

One day, the princes Alessandro and Ippolito de' Medici, riding in state through the city, passed the house of the Lapi, and the two sisters saw with some surprise, this same young man, riding apparently on terms of equality with them. All three looked up at once, and stared the two maidens in the face, then passing on, they turned in their saddles, first one, then another, and then laughed among themselves. Laudomia, who was looking out of the window, retreated, and for the first time, she reddened with shame. The conduct of the young men seemed to her insulting, and she experienced a sense of humiliation and remorse without exactly knowing why. However, docile to that mysterious internal voice, for young maidens as safe and sure a guide as experience, which is called modesty, ever after that, when she heard the tramp of horses, she never went to the window, nor looked into the street. But poor Lisa, though admonished to a like course by her sister, was disposed to have her own way, and she did very differently. *The first time the young man appeared again, she did avoid him*

like Laudomia, but afterwards, without any regard to Laudomia's advice, whenever she heard the sound of horses' hoofs on the pavement, in the distance, she hung down her head, blushed, and, approaching the window, would pretend to look elsewhere, but let her glances fall directly upon the cavalier who was passing by.

The good Laudomia was not a little pained on observing this, and addressed a few words of reproof to her sister, who, however much she might have been to blame, stoutly denied it, but her face was like a flame of fire. Laudomia saw how things stood and was silent. She knew that Lisa's head was not to be guided by a silken thread.

Indeed, Liza had a good heart, her soul was generous and honest, but her mother, who considered her a prodigy, and who could never bear to see her crossed, did not know, or at least knew too late, how fatal is that love, which, to spare a child a few tears, neglects to instil the idea that it is not right that everybody and everything should yield to its wishes. Accustomed to have her own way from a mere child, she could not endure the slightest opposition, and habituated to the praises, or we might say, the adulations of her mother, the least correction she received from others, she construed into malevolence; and whereas a wise and judicious management would have rendered her a woman of high thought and noble purpose, left to herself, she became proud and obstinate.

Meantime, after the first few words of monition dropped by Laudomia, the subject was never again alluded to. And, as between two persons who are accustomed to interchange their every thought, nothing so effectually generates coldness as the feeling that there is one chord which each knows must not be touched, so now there was between them, we will not say anything like ill-will, but they no longer saw each other with the same eyes as before. Laudomia knew too well that to speak to her sister of her love, (inexperienced as she was, she knew it could be called nothing else,) and not show herself favorable to it, would have no other result than to alienate Liza from her entirely. To speak against her conscience, and thus ingratiate herself with her sister she was not capable of doing even in thought, so she remained silent, and could only pray God to save her sister from peril. But every day confirmed her in the belief that her prayers were unheard, and that Lisa's heart was more and more under the influence of a growing passion. She saw her gradually changing in her appearance and her habits: some choice flowers which she kept on the terrace of the upper story, and in which, cultivating them with her own hand, she

had always taken the greatest pleasure, she now suffered to wither for the want of water ; and a little bird that had been a great pet with her, came near dying, having been left two whole days without food. But what most distressed the excellent Laudomia, was, to see her neglect the offices of religion, or perform them with the greatest indifference and remissness. All these things caused the elder sister deep sorrow. At length came the day of Calendi-Maggio, a fête celebrated in Florence by the authorities, and particularly by the youth, with dancing and other pastimes, when, dressed in holiday attire, and crowned with flowers, the young of both sexes flocked in crowds to see the jousting, the tilting and the games at foot-ball. Lisa and Laudomia went with one of their relatives to witness the festival in the Piazza S. Croce, and soon found themselves in the midst of a dense and shifting crowd, in which Liza vanished, and all their efforts to find her proved unavailing. She returned home, however, soon after the others, and though Niccolò and the rest of the family thought nothing of an accident, common enough in such a confusion, Laudomia, though she said nothing, understood the occurrence differently, and a thousand suspicions found their way into her mind. But she knew more of the matter than the others. All that evening, Liza, though she made every effort to appear as usual, could not conceal from the vigilant eye of her sister a certain degree of agitation, a something unusual in the expression of her countenance, and her whole manner.

Laudomia, noting thus these symptoms of a steadily increasing passion, which kept her constantly immersed in the most gloomy and painful forebodings, had just grounds for the deepest anxiety. She saw too well, that no virtuous result could be hoped from it. The young man was of the Pallescan party, of that party which had wrought infinite wrong to her father and all his family, and which had always shown itself inimical to the ancient laws and ancient liberties of Florence. Was it to be supposed that her father would ever be willing to own for a son-in-law one of this faction? Add to this, that the anxious sister, making distant and apparently casual inquiries of her brothers and the friends of the family, with regard to the character and habits of this young man, had heard things that highly displeased her. She learned that he was a Messer Troilo degli Ardinghelli, a favorite of the Medici, a courtier and a man of corrupt life. To these considerations, relating to family and party interests, was added another of a more intimate and domestic nature.

In the manutatory of Niccolò, there was a young man who had been brought up in the family from a very tender age, whose

name was Lamberto. He was humbly born. His father, a worker in the art of Por S. Maria,* had, by his fidelity and superior talents, so won the favor of Niccolò, that, from being a poor operative, he had raised him to the head of all his affairs. The poor man paid with his blood the obligations he owed his benefactor.

When, on the 6th of April, 1498, the enemies of Fra Girolamo attacked the church and convent of S. Marco, an immense number of Piagnoni, and among them, Niccolò, attended by Piero, the father of Lamberto, ran thither and shut themselves up within the convent, for the defence of their apostle. The contest lasted several hours into the night, the assailants being in great numbers, fighting with arms of every description, arquebuses and stones, and those within making a most determined resistance, as much violence being used on both sides, as would be required for the storming of a fortress. The *Padre* with his *frati* having walked in solemn procession through the whole convent, repaired to the church, where, having placed the host in the tabernacle, they laid it upon the altar, and began their religious services by all chanting together, "*Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, et benedic Hereditate tua,*" momentarily expecting martyrdom. Although Fra Girolamo would not consent that arms should be used in defence of his person, Fra Domenico da Pescia and many noble citizens, among whom were Francesco Valori, Battista Ridolfi and T. Davanzati, pressed around him, and were deliberating upon repulsing their adversaries by force of arms, when the latter, setting fire to the door of the church, forced their way in, in immense numbers, attacking, hand to hand, monks and Piagnoni, and the struggle lasted several hours. A novitiate monk, named Herico, a German, mounted the pulpit, and with an arquebus, shot down great numbers of the enemy, and every time he fired, he also repeated, "*Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine,*" &c. and a frate of the Bibliotti, with a crucifix of brass, struck out the eye of Jacopo di Tanai de' Nerli, and this that we have related will give some idea of these times.

Niccolò, who was then fifty-eight years of age, was fighting in the centre of the church, opposite the altar of the Madonna, when the faithful Piero at his side, observing an adversary, of whose vicinity Niccolò was unaware, who, with a huge partisan, was aiming a blow at Niccolò, which must have proved mortal, there being no other way of intercepting it, threw himself be-

* The silk manufacture was called the art of Por S. Maria, because, at first, all the shops devoted to this business were there.

tween Niccolò and the impending weapon, and received the whole force of it in his breast; the weapon pierced him through, and his blood deluged Niccolò from head to foot. Several frati ran, as was their custom, to the assistance of the fallen; they raised the wounded man and bore him to the altar, where, having with the utmost composure partaken of the sacrament, and thanked God for death in such a cause, he turned his dying eyes to Niccolò, who, not without tears, was supporting his head, and said, "I leave my Nunziata in the seventh month of her approaching peril; to you I commend my son, or daughter, as the case may be," and without power to say more, he resigned his soul to God.

From this time, as may be supposed, Niccolò took the tenderest care of Nunziata; and Lamberto, born two months after, was always treated as if he were his own son. Finding that he was quick to learn, he gave him sufficient instruction to qualify him to become his book-keeper, allowing him a generous salary, and thinking day and night how he should establish him in life, and thus, in a measure, repay the immense obligation he owed to his father.

Niccolò was a rich merchant, and he might have said to Lamberto, "take this sum of money and do with it as you please;" but, in the first place, it seemed to him that obligations of this kind were ill-repaid with money; and, besides, his family being large, he thought it would be unjust to diminish the property of his children for a cause which had sole reference to himself.

He proposed in his own mind to give to Lamberto one of his daughters, with a suitable portion, and thus no one's interests would be injured. But though the young man, who was now over twenty years of age, was one who might not fear the refusal of any young lady, Niccolò had too much good sense and too much justice to wish to arrange such a connection, without being sure of the willing concurrence of both parties. To take any steps in the matter, or to propose it himself, did not seem to him consistent with his dignity, and he deferred the matter, hoping that time would favor the accomplishment of his wishes.

That Niccolò desired to make Lamberto his son-in-law, without regarding his obscure origin, was no cause of surprise to those who knew them both. The old man was not one of those who are opposed to the aristocracy of the nobles, because they envy them, or wish them annihilated, that they may take their places. He considered every man the child of his own deeds, and esteemed him in proportion to his virtue, and there-

fore deemed it highly disastrous for a city to contain a class of men, whether nobles, merchants artisans, or any set of men whatever, who, restricting themselves to the society of each other, and separating themselves from the other citizens, avoiding all contact with such as are not of their own clique, assume an arbitrary arrogance of manner toward those whom they regard as their inferiors, — men seeking to acquire authority, wealth and honor, not by virtue of their own deserts, but from the sole accident of being born in this or that position of society. But how rare are men like Niccolò, who detest abuses solely from the love of equity and honesty, and not from the fear of having their own interests injured, or from vexation that they cannot bring them into play, to the injury of others.

But Lamberto, on his part, would have deserved to be placed among the exceptions by a father, who estimated birth and riches of far more importance than did Niccolò. If the reader desires to figure to himself the portrait of Lamberto, let him imagine a young man of tall stature, capable by the excellent proportion of his limbs, of anything that requires strength and dexterity. And this is enough of his physical man. In his moral part, nature had endowed him with that gift which she reserves for her favored ones — for those who without distinction of state or fortune, she destines to high deeds, — a gift, that may be called the love, or rather, the thirst for perfection. Fertile seed of noble deeds and great virtues, and of all that is sublime in human operations! Severe judge, that whisper in the ear of the applauded, “thou couldst do more!” Spur that still urges onward him who is born to feel it, because, in every act of life, he sees how far he is from the perfection already attained by the great and good, — at once the torment of the soul, and the fount of so many joys! May it not be the impression left in man by that divine breath, with which the Lord called him from nothing!

This noble passion, which in Lamberto went on increasing in fervor as he advanced in years, had incited him studiously to profit by the good fortune of being brought up in a family where he had every means of developing his moral and physical nature.

Foreseeing, perhaps, that his life was not to be consumed in a silk manufactory, he had striven to render himself worthy of a more brilliant fortune, in confirming his health and strength by all kinds of gentlemanly exercises, in which he excelled all his fellows; and maturing his mind by the study of history and by listening to the discussions that often took place in the

house of Niccolò, among those statesmen who resorted thither. By these means he was enabled to form to himself a capital of solid and varied information by which, and by the habit formed from childhood, of never acting, or forming any opinion, without previous thought, he had become a man, when most of his age, are little more than boys.

It is true also (not to be silent as to his defects), that, exactly on account of this love of the beautiful and the good, he was easily and with incredible vehemence, inflamed by those things and those persons that he imagined possessed great and noble qualities, and whom his heated imagination invested with degrees of perfection far beyond what belonged to them; and then, as often happens with warm temperaments, becoming sensible that he was partly or totally deceived, he passed from immoderate admiration to as immoderate contempt. And here it will not be inappropriate to observe, that if young men of firm minds and generous hearts, would only guard against these precipitate and excessive judgments, they would avoid many errors, and would not have to reproach themselves for so much injustice, and the evils which are its consequences. The disappointment arising from vanished illusions would not cause them to conceive against humanity that blind and arrogant hate which has produced so many fine poetical declamations, but which has never rendered man more virtuous or happy.

It might rather be demonstrated, that, on the contrary, such a course only renders men more severe in their judgments of others, and greater lovers of themselves, by closing their minds to the knowledge of a truth apparent enough to every sensible mind, that, if there are in the world many knaves, there are also many honest men, and that both, including these ferocious haters of our species, do severally perform some very good, and some very foolish actions, whence, we are all reduced to the necessity of exercising holy patience with one another; to praise the good, to blame the bad, to pity those men, who, by nature, fluctuate between the two, and finally to admonish them, and aid them if we can, instead of uselessly abusing and cursing them. These observations, however, do not apply to Lamberto. He had known few trials, and meeting with the greatest kindness in the family of Niccolò, had never known cause of enmity, and his modest and affectionate ways, and the tender gratitude which he showed to Niccolò, had endeared him to the old man, his sons, and to all who knew him. There was one, however, in the house who, perhaps, without being in the least aware of it, loved him differently from all the rest, and that person was *Laudomia*. Indeed, if two hearts were

ever naturally made to mingle, it was theirs. But Lamberto, although he felt drawn to her by the sympathy which comes from resemblance of character, was, however, restrained by the pure and virginal splendor that shone in her; which made him think himself too far below one his imagination judged to be so high and so divine. He rarely saw her, more rarely spoke to her, and at length it seemed to him that she looked on him with indifference and avoided him. The timid, modest youth, asked himself "Do I not deserve one glance?" But the daughter of Niccolò was far from despising him, and avoided him only from that innate delicacy which governed all her actions. Liza, on the other hand, treated Lamberto very differently. She always met him with the easy confidence of one who has nothing to conceal.

The open and sincere heart of Lamberto was just in that stage in which it first lends itself to love; when the power of that passion makes itself felt even before having found the object on which to rest; a time fraught with peril, anguish, delights and trepidations, a time when a man falls almost always into the first snare, allured by the most seductive bait. Every thing then depends upon his falling into good hands.

The heart of the youth who had not dared to raise his wishes so high as Laudomia, turned naturally and almost involuntarily to Liza, and finally yielded entirely, placing on her alone all his hopes, and his every thought. That subtle, perceptive sense which nature has given to every woman, revealed to Liza, girl as she was, the nature and extent of Lamberto's feelings towards her. She luxuriated in the joy of being loved and what pure and innocent heart does not? But this complacency was, perhaps, in her, more that of self-love than of a feeling heart. If she *could* have loved Lamberto, she probably would have done so passionately; as it was, his love merely gave her importance in her own eyes, for the thought never crossed her mind that she could become the wife of one who passed his life, yard-stick in hand, measuring brocades.

Lamberto then, who by nature, and by reason of his humble origin, was distrustful of himself, partly imagining the thoughts of the young girl, was sometimes quite in despair, then, seeing himself so caressed by Niccolò and treated so like a son, he was a little encouraged; and the old man, though without communicating his own plans, exerted himself to discover the nature of Liza's feelings towards Lamberto, being almost certain there was something between them, and managing without too open demonstration, to have it understood that he should *put no obstacle* in the way of their union. At last, one day,

when Niccolò was in the room with only Lamberto and Liza, Liza accidentally went out, and Lamberto, without thinking of being observed, followed her with a glance, and that glance said enough. Niccolò smiled, and placing his hand on the head of the young man, said, "Lamberto I wish you every good, because I know you to be an honest man, and know, Lamberto, that for a husband for my Liza, I care not that a man should be rich or of high birth, but that he should be an honest man, and that Liza should love him," then stopping a moment, and looking kindly at Lamberto, whose face was like a burning coal, he repeated again, "and that Liza should love him: you have heard me." Niccolò was already out of the room, and Lamberto rubbed his eyes and moved his limbs, to satisfy himself that he was not dreaming. At last he recovered himself, and, elate with joy and hope, he exclaimed, "Now, if I cannot gain her, I shall have no one to blame but myself." But to poison this joy, came the thought that Liza would be too proud to place her love on one of low degree, and for the first time in his life, he felt pained by the remembrance of his obscure origin: for the first time he thought, sighing, "Would that I had been born a lord!" But soon, quite ashamed of his useless repinings, he said, shaking his head, "Am I not a man like others?" and then his vivid imagination saw drawn up before him a long array of Italians, who, from poverty and obscurity, had risen to rank and eminence. He remembered what he had read of Castruccio, of Uguccione della Faggiuola, of Sforza, and Carmagnola, and of so many others, and applying to himself a passage of the *Purgatory* of Dante, exclaimed, "I also am of this country."

" ———— ove un Marcel diventa
" Ogni villan che parteggiando viene."

Passing then from one idea to another, he confirmed himself still more in these thoughts, reasoning thus: "Niccolò, it is true, would give me Liza, because I am the son of the man who shed his blood for him, but, nevertheless, he cannot help knowing I am the son of a poor operative, and that if he would, he could give her to the first man in Florence, who, on his part, would deem himself honored by the choice."

The soul of Lamberto, nobly emulous, disclaimed the thought that his benefactor, that Liza, would never have reason to be proud of him, while his heated imagination already saw Landonia the wife of some great man, his new brother-in-law, looking down with scorn upon the poor silk-weaver, equally slighted by their friends and associates, while Liza, of course he always

thought her perfection) wounded by these tokens of contempt, would be forced to defend him, to come to his aid, almost to protect him! This idea was so bitter to him, and the thought of passing his days in such a state of degradation and neglect, seemed so revolting, that with sudden determination he resolved, at every cost, to qualify himself for a better fate. Full of ardor and hope, he saw open before his eyes a new scene, resplendent with feats of arms, with deeds of glory, and in the back-ground he saw himself crowned with military honors, the honored and powerful lord of a castle, Liza acknowledged by the gentry and envied by her companions and friends. Intoxicated by these seducing fancies, knowing himself strong in courage and in body, capable of almost any difficult thing, he exclaimed — quite angry with himself that he had not had such thoughts at first, — “how happy I ought to be to know that I have a heart and an arm equal to that of any other man,” and he added, “if God aid me, as I will aid myself, Niccolò will not have to blush for his son-in-law, nor Liza to envy any other woman.

Lamberto's plan of giving himself to the business of arms, was not, at this period, unaccompanied by a certain probability of arriving at a splendid fortune; it being well understood, that to attain distinction in military life, he who entered upon it, must possess, in an eminent degree, the gifts necessary to such a position, with the necessary proviso, that a musket-ball came not too soon in the way of his promotion. The custom of employing Condottieri, was still in vogue, and every one was free to become so, provided that he rose to such reputation among the soldiers, that they were content to own him as leader. As every soldier adopted his profession of his own free choice, and as a means of acquiring wealth and rank, the greatest numbers flocked to the standard of that commander with whom they promised themselves the best fortune. The condottiero, accepting or refusing at his own option, could form to himself a select company, and this mode of raising an army had this advantage — that no one, not actually worthy of command by his experience in the things of war, could ever arrive at it. But at the moment in which Lamberto was about to carry his resolution into effect, a thought occurred to him, if not as an insuperable obstacle, at least, as a difficulty which is always more or less serious in proportion to the goodness of the man to whom it occurs. Lamberto still had a mother. She was originally a peasant-girl of Lucca, who, after her marriage with Piero, came with him to Florence several years before Lamberto was born. To her might have been applied *the eulogium* contained in those four words which served as

epitaph to a Roman matron, "*Domum mansit — Lanam fecit,*" (she staid at home — she spun wool.) But I think I hear some of my lady readers (if I should ever be so fortunate as to have any say, smiling, "So we poor women are good for nothing but to stay at home and spin!" Ah! my dear ladies, (assuming, of course, that we do not take the words of the epitaph in their literal sense,) if you only knew how great, how noble, how truly important you are made in my eyes, by the holy trust committed to you in this world by Divine Providence! If the truly beautiful, the truly great, the truly important, are to be measured by the useful and the good, who can hold a higher place than the good wife, the good mother? Who supports the first steps, consoles the first sorrows of these proud men, who, when grown, still cling to you, still turn to your gentle souls, to find a solace for the woes of life? Who, like you, are capable of living lives of sacrifice, immolating yourselves wholly for the good, the happiness of him to whom you have given your affections? Among men, acts of heroism are always sustained by applause and gratulations; with you, on the contrary, however great and arduous may be the trials of your virtue, they are hidden and forgotten within the domestic walls.

If you knew how completely the good of human society is in your hands, how everything depends on the family relation, how much rests on you in constituting men generous and patriotic, active and intelligent, gentle and polished, you would not envy our sex the sad privilege of killing men in battle, or with vials and recipes, the two most approved modes of sending them to the other world, of tormenting and ruining them by legal processes, the cause of thousand evils, or deceiving them with books. God grant that my gentle reader may not be tempted to add, and to make us yawn over such a story as this! But we will not suppose her so perverse; for if the ladies are not on my side, what hope is there for me? Turn we now to Lamberto's mother.

CHAPTER IX.

NUNZIATA had always been not only a true and faithful wife, which, though sufficient to maintain the honor of a husband, is not all that is necessary to secure his happiness, but within the narrow limits of her humble dwelling, she was the good housewife, thrifty, without parsimony, taking care that her husband and her one little servant girl should want for nothing, and that they should be provided with decent and comfortable clothing, suitable to their station in life. Beside all this, at the end of the year she was always able to lay up a little money for a time of need. Whatever deficiency the salary Piero received from Niccolò could not supply, she endeavored to make up in the labors of the reel, which she kept whirling all day, and sometimes part of the night, so that the neighbors, when they chid their children for their restlessness used to say, "You are just like Nunziata's reel."

It is true, that, conscious of the excellent order with which she governed the house, she sometimes allowed herself to grumble a little when any signs of rebellion appeared among her subjects; but as subjects and governor were agreed in essentials, content with being necessary to each other, it was in the family of Piero, as it is in England, where, if any dissension arises, no one wishes to push matters to extremities and overthrow the government. If the comparison be a little disproportioned, the relative importance is about the same, so we beg the reader to admit it.

As long as Piero lived, things went on thus. After his death, Niccolò, when Lamberto was a few years old, took him to his own house, and accommodated Nunziata with a small cottage belonging to him, near San Lorenzo, where the good dame, as she advanced in years, and was overtaken by the infirmities, could relax a little from her labors, aided by the generosity of Niccolò, to whom she might now be said to owe *her whole maintenance*.

Her house consisted of only one room besides the small kitchen: but Nunziata was a dear lover of order, and she kept it spotless as a mirror. On her bed, always so smoothly made, were scattered flowers, as was the custom then in Florence, and on the wall, above the pillows, were many pious relics, the olive-branch, the palm, the paschal wax, and little images of the Virgin and the Saints. At one side of the room was a shelf, on which were neatly arranged her vessels of earthen-ware, as well as those of tin and pewter, which shone like silver through the branches of laurel with which the good woman had decorated her simple side-board, a table, a few chairs, and the reel, the inseparable companion of her whole life. She was a little withered woman, who looked as if her life had been too laborious to allow her to grow fat, and her clothes were coarse, but neatly put on, and without a spot.

The good dame lived happily in this little house, without other company than a black cat, who, judging from the manner in which she conducted herself at meal-times, might be called a companion rather than a dependent. Nunziata prepared her own meals, and waited upon herself, excepting, that the neighbors, seeing how infirm she was, drew water for her, when she needed it, just out of the kindness of their hearts, not for thanks, for the poor generally, among themselves, open your eyes ye rich men and lordlings, when unable to help each other with money, do it with their hands.

In her solitude, rarely interrupted, Nunziata had, however, one thought which occupied her entirely, and that was the welfare of her son. Beginning from the time when he was an infant at the breast, and, all along through the years of childhood, youth and manhood, she had endeavored by all the methods that love suggests, to instil into his mind such principles as should make him an honest man, and enable him to enjoy all the happiness compatible with his humble fortune.

When she saw him established in the family of Niccolo, she believed so much care and anxiety had not been in vain: and now it seemed as if every day the good conduct of Lamberto was co-operating with her efforts, to render his future prospects highly flattering.

When, one day he confided to her his love for Liza, and the hopes he entertained, the good woman, who could not conceive of anything in the world so great, so rich and so powerful as the family of the Lapi, and who thought he had already reached the height of human felicity in seeing Lamberto holding office there, instead of a servant's place, knowing besides, how self-willed Liza was, was much alarmed, trembling lest this love

might excite the anger of Niccolò, and thus ruin the future hopes of her son, so she endeavored to convince him how much danger there was in such a thing, and she begged him to conquer his passion, sighing as she said, "If it were only Laudomia now on whom you had placed your love! She, my son, might do for you, but remember you are not her equal. Think of it, my son."

Nunziata, like all old women who live entirely alone, and who when they have any serious matter to think about, revolve it in their minds till their brain gets excited, and they see the thing in an aspect a thousand times more terrible than it really is, lived in a state of the greatest solicitude respecting her son, and whenever he came to pass an hour with her, she endeavored with those arguments and caresses that a loving mother knows how to use, to induce him to take the course *she* deemed best for him.

Matters stood thus, when the words of Niccolò changed into certainty the hopes of Lamberto, and drove him to the resolution already named.

But how announce it to his mother, how say to her, a poor infirm old woman, affectionate beyond all other mothers, "I leave you, and go to the battle field!"

Lamberto, though much perplexed by this idea, was not disheartened. He knew that his mother, like all the women of the 16th century, considered it under some circumstances, a virtuous and manly thing to take arms; that to dissuade husband or son from so doing, when there was just cause for resistance, would be a vile and cowardly act. In fact, Nunziata, grown somewhat aged in stormy and troublous times, had, from observation and from the conversation she was in the habit of hearing, become accustomed to bold and daring thoughts, so that, when Lamberto, after having repeated to her the words of Niccolò, opened his whole heart, telling her all he had resolved to accomplish, with all the reasonings *pro et con* which he had so long weighed in his mind, though at first, it seemed to her that she could not think of such a sacrifice, she gradually yielded, if not content, at least resigned to the arguments of her son. She was poor and unlettered, but she was capable of those generous thoughts which germinate in a good mind without the aid of books. Her first objections conquered, upon considering the thing more quietly, the idea pleased her, that Lamberto was unwilling to accept his good fortune, without first rendering himself worthy of it. She felt a noble pride in thinking that he would become the son-in-law of one of the first citizens of Florence, without owing it to

anything but his personal merits. In fine, the departure of Lamberto was resolved upon by mutual accord.

While he was secretly preparing the clothes, arms, and other things of which he stood in need, a part of which he purchased with his own money, and a part with his mother's who, in this, his need, willingly devoted to him the savings of so many years; a remark that escaped from Liza's lips, confirmed him in his purpose, and hastened its execution.

He heard her say, one day when talking with her brothers of a young relative, who was devoting himself to the study of law, "As for me, no one really looks like a man to me, except on horseback, with a corslet on his breast." These words sounded to Lamberto's ears as if she had said, "Now if you wish to marry me, you know what you have to do."

Two days after this, at early dawn, the young man, covered with armor, knocked at Nunziata's door, to embrace her, and ask her blessing. The reader may easily imagine their words and actions, without our undertaking to describe them minutely.

At the moment of parting, the poor woman took the head of Lamberto between her withered, trembling hands, as he knelt at her feet, kissed his forehead and blessed him, and placing a cord of brass around his neck, she said, "Never part with this, my son, it will bring you good fortune," and Lamberto departed.

But before he set forward to the gate of S. Gallo, through which his road lay, he turned his horse, and stopped at the great door of the house of the Lapi. He had never had the courage to speak openly and clearly to Liza, but the moment of departure, and the resolution he had taken, made him bold. The very arms he wore, it seemed to him, had changed him into another man, and perhaps he was so young he enjoyed the idea of presenting himself to Liza, glittering with steel, and thought within himself, "Now, when I am far away, and she thinks of me, it will be with sword and shield, and not with that cursed yastick, and those hateful broadsides."

He alighted from his horse, and resolutely mounting the steps, soon arrived at the gallery of the upper story. Liza was already up, and had come out with the watering-pot to water her flowers before the sunrise.

The words that passed between them were brief and hurried.

"If I return," said Lamberto, keeping at a little distance from the maiden, with hands joined as if in prayer, "If I return, I will be worthy of you, or you shall say that your Lam-

berto lost his life to deserve you; should this be, will you sometimes think of me? But if God reserve me to a better fortune, will you be content to wait for me?"

Liza leaned for support against the low wall of the gallery; for this unexpected apparition, these arms, and, above all, the words of the young man, at once so solemn and so tender, had thrown her into such a state of agitation that her limbs refused their office. She felt the tears cloud her vision, and she said in a low tone, turning her head away, "Yes, poor Lamberto." She extended her hand to a pot of roses, then in full flower, plucked one, gave it to Lamberto and vanished into her apartment. In a moment Lamberto was in the street, but, in regaining his saddle, every petal fell from the rose, and a light breeze springing up, scattered them in the air. Lamberto in utter consternation, watched them as they floated tremblingly in the air, and then fell to the ground. With a sigh he placed in his bosom the stem and green leaves,—all that now remained to him, and hurried away with a saddened heart,—his thoughts fixed on this ominous rose, so short-lived and so treacherous. Let us not deride him, poor youth, when the heart is at this pass,—a mere nothing is sufficient to afflict or console it.

Liza immediately communicated the incident to her sister, and soon Niccolò, and his brothers also, were informed of the part Lamberto had taken. Upon going into his room, they found upon the table, a letter for Niccolò, in which the young man, after returning due thanks for the many benefits he had received from him, and asking pardon for going without taking leave, without receiving from Niccolò the paternal benediction, opened his heart fully to him, declaring, that, notwithstanding the deep love he cherished for Liza, notwithstanding the gracious words of the father, he was not so blind as not to know how far inferior he was personally, to the good fortune to which he had been encouraged to aspire; that it seemed to him the extreme of baseness and a most unworthy return for so many favors, to take advantage of the goodness of heart which prompted the generous offer of Niccolò: that he was now going to put forth all the powers of his mind and body to show to the world at least, that if he was an humble, obscure person he had, nevertheless, thoughts and feelings worthy of a better fortune. He begged then that Liza would not forget one who so faithfully loved her, and asked that she would be willing to wait a couple of years for him, as he hoped, before the expiration of that time, to send her tidings that should enable her to say, "Lamberto has become a man." And this was underlined, referring to her own words.

Niccolò, who, by reason of his own lofty nature, loved to witness tokens of strong character in others, was filled with admiration of Lamberto's course, and though he much regretted his departure, he could not enough praise the high notions of honor that dictated it.

And Liza, reflecting that the young man had gone to encounter so many perils and hardships solely for love of her, was touched in the vulnerable corner of her heart; she gained added importance in her own eyes, and felt that she might be proud of such a lover. With one of Liza's character it is very rare that satisfied self-love does not open the door to love, and in these first moments, hearing him so much praised, and his return so much desired by all, she thought she did love him, and perhaps she really did. Interrogated by Niccolò in the first warmth of her feelings, she answered that she was content to wait for him, and already she seemed to see him returning lord of a realm.

Now, reader, do you wish to know who prompted Niccolò to say what he did to Lamberto? It was the good Laudomia, who, aware of Lamberto's love for Liza, and esteeming it a great good fortune for her sister, had banished or rather shut up in the depths of her own soul all thoughts of self, to occupy herself solely with the good of Liza and of Lamberto, to whom, from this moment, she gave only the affections of a sister.

So true it is, that in this world lie concealed in many an obscure corner, souls of heroes, in comparison with whom Alexander, Caesar and their like, are a poor contemptible race! And the difference between them is quickly understood — the latter sacrifice others to enjoy themselves, the former sacrifice themselves to make the enjoyment of others.

A year had now elapsed since the departure of Lamberto, and with the exception of one letter, in which he stated that he was in the employ of Sig. Filippino D'Oria, bearing arms on board one of his galleys, nothing had been heard from him. Doubts arose in the minds of Niccolò's family that they might not have rightly understood him, and in the heart of Liza, his image was becoming gradually effaced by distance, by the uncertainty of the event, but more than all, it was being gradually superseded by that of Troilo.

It may be imagined how trying it must have been to Laudomia, to see this Lamberto, whom *her* heart had so well-known and appreciated, whom she had renounced with so much self-denial, to secure her sister's happiness; this Lamberto, who, for love of that sister, had shown such loftiness of soul, had left for her sake, country, kinsfolks, friends and the dear de-

lights of home — to see him, I say, so soon forgotten for a brainless coxcomb, an idle courtier, in fine, one of that party who had brought upon Florence and upon her family so many woes.

Unable longer to control in silence her painful emotions, one evening, just at twilight, — that hour, which may be called the hour of confidence, — finding herself alone in the room with Liza, she took her hands within her own, and said, almost weeping, “Oh, Liza! the poor Lamberto — his plighted faith — his love — have you indeed wholly forgotten him?” Liza answered briefly, but with bitterness and scorn.

Laudomia said no more, but she left the room, for she could not restrain her tears. She wept as one weeps, when, with regard to the virtues, the worth of one he loves, he is constrained to stay, “I was deceived.”

But very soon came the moment when this sensation of chilled affection which she felt for Liza disappeared, or rather was changed into compassion, into a degree of anxiety more warm and tender than ever.

Towards the end of May, Niccolò went with his family to a farm that he owned near the Poggio a Cajano, villa of the Signori Medici. He and his sons went daily to Florence for the transaction of their business, so that the sisters were left much alone with only an old serving woman, called Mona Fedra — a good creature, but credulous and short-sighted in the extreme.

One morning, Laudomia, who slept with her sister, on awaking at sunrise, found that Liza was not at her side. Thinking she had descended to the garden to enjoy the cool air, she went thither, but she was not there; the old servant too was missing. Laudomia knew not what to think.

In a short time both appeared, but evidently much agitated and embarrassed; they talked incoherently, and answered her questions at random. Laudomia began to tremble with apprehension, and leading her sister to her own room, she asked her in a distressed tone, what had taken her from home so early, and what this agitation meant.

Liza burst into a flood of tears, and throwing herself on her sister's neck, said, “I am his wife.” Laudomia, on hearing these terrible words, which sounded in her ears like the prophecy of interminable woes, remained breathless, then covering her face with her hands, she could only say, “Ah! unhappy wretch, what have you done?”

Then, perceiving that at this time she could gather nothing more from her sister, she ran to the old servant to get some

information from her, and with sad words, now beseeching, and now chiding, she at last induced her to tell all. The old woman wondered much to see Laudomia so disturbed by this transaction, and she kept asseverating that "Troilo was a grand gentleman: that it was a very honorable connection for Liza; that if he *did* wish to have the marriage celebrated privately, with *signori*, it was not best to look too narrowly into things, they having their whims as well as other folks, and that Niccolò would be satisfied at last," and a deal more of such stuff.

In fact, to cut matters short, the thing was done, and in what villanous manner the reader already knows, but not one of these poor women knew it, so that the servant, the more to re-assure Laudomia, narrated the ceremony particularly, extolling the courtesy of the bridegroom, and affirming that the rite was performed according to the prescribed rules of the church, with priest, witnesses, &c., so that the brave-hearted Laudomia, knowing that nothing is more vain and useless than to fret over ills that have no remedy, took the wise part of directing all her cares to preventing its sad consequences. Her first thought, her counsel to Liza was, that she should throw herself at her father's feet and confess the whole; but Liza had not moral courage enough to follow her advice. It rarely happens that those who need such counsel, are capable of carrying it into effect. They hope to cover by dissimulation a first false step; but the evil which, speedily known, admits a remedy, remaining unknown, becomes incurable.

If Liza had followed her sister's advice, without doubt she would have had to encounter the first fury of her father's wrath; but as he would at once have demanded the proofs of the validity of the marriage, the vile imposture would have been immediately discovered, the remedy would have been easy and timely, and Liza's ruin would not have been accomplished. But let us narrate events in their order.

The human heart is so pervaded by the love of self, that even the most noble are, in a measure, under its influence. Laudomia, on hearing her sister's story, could not resist the thought that flashed through her mind, "Then, Lamberto is free," but she was at once distressed for having had such a thought; it seemed to her a thing so utterly vile and abominable, that she should find any advantage to herself in her sister's guilt, that in her innocent simplicity, she thought herself a wretch, and she wept bitterly. She redoubled her cares for Liza, and it seemed to her that this increased tenderness lightened her own heart, and was a kind of reparation for the wrong she had done her.

With the hope, then, that some propitious moment might

give a more favorable turn to things, since, at any rate, she was the wife of Troilo, she deemed it best to assist Liza in keeping the secret of her marriage, and, at the same time, to facilitate her occasional secret interviews with her husband.

Things went on in this way several months, very little, however, to the satisfaction of Liza, who could rarely see her husband, owing to the state of subjection in which she lived. Constrained to hide her trials within her own breast, and living in perpetual fear of discovery, she was evidently pining and losing her youthful bloom. Indeed, she was already quite changed. The waning of her beauty became a source of the greater regret to her, as it seemed to her that she perceived growing coolness on the part of Troilo, while she, on the contrary, only loved him more blindly every day.

Once, if he could not visit her, he would show himself to her in the street or in church, as the case might be; but now it seemed to her that he was gradually remitting his attention. The hapless Liza felt, as is natural, deeply pained by these suspicions; thoughts of jealousy, the more tormenting, as she had so little means of knowing the truth, agitated her breast altogether, she had a most miserable life, and was reaping but too soon the fruits of the error she had committed.

But the unhappy young creature was hardly at the commencement of her trials.

It was at length apparent that she was not alone to bear the penalty of her fault. That moment desired, indeed, and yet full of so much joy and anxious solicitude to the newly-married, was to poor Liza like the announcement of some fearful calamity. And here were new motives for concealment, and new difficulties in the way of it—increase of suffering for the present—for the future.

It is needless to go into a minute account of the method adopted by the two sisters to conceal, in these last days of pain and anguish, first the mother, and then the child. Experience has many times proved it possible for events like these to transpire unknown and unobserved, even in families watched by the eye of a mother. In the house of the Lapi, it was a very difficult matter, such a thing being the farthest possible from Niccolò's thoughts, which were absorbed in the affairs of Florence or his own business; besides, he was often absent and when at home, confined himself to the lower floor.

But this secret, so studiously kept, came very near being betrayed through the agency of Liza herself. Much as *Lisdomia* and the servant besought and entreated, they could not persuade her to part with her child and put it out to nurse.

more docile character, maternal love, though beautiful and anxious, would have been willing to bend to some supposed acute necessity ; but Liza was resolute, and finding herself opposed, she became so excited and unmanageable that, fearing her life, she was suffered to have her own way.

But then it became necessary to confide the secret to some other woman. Under color of the necessity of having another servant to take care of the family wardrobe, a woman from one of the remote wards of Florence was taken into the house, an additional servant, who, being seen with Liza's child in her arms, was considered its mother, and it was supposed that she concealed it. There being no others in the family but men who had their minds on other things, this also passed off very easily.

In deed, Niccolò and his sons, sometimes annoyed by the child's crying, would say to the young woman, " Why do you consider such a nuisance as that in the house ? Are there not men enough in Florence without children ? " But the matter soon passed off without further remark. Thus, in homely families, the men had their say, but the women had their way, as is generally the case in families where men and women undertake to discuss domestic arrangements.

Meantime, notwithstanding the expulsion of the Medici, and the humbling of the Pallescan party, remained in Florence with a large number of his fellow-partisans, in order to profit of any opportunity he might have of assisting the Medici and the Pallescan party.

But when the captains of Charles V. came to an open rupture with the Florentines, the suspicions of the government increased, and they showed themselves more and more rigid towards the orders of the banished family, many of whom thought it desirable to flee from the city. Liza's pretended husband also fled secretly, and proceeded to the Imperial camp, which was celebrating mass at Fuligno. He could not, nor did he wish to exchange a word with Liza before his departure. He wrote her, however, in order somewhat to pacify her. He wrote that it would not be a loyal or honorable act for a gentleman to break faith with his *signori* and abandon them in their misfortune ; exhorted her to be of good courage, to take care of herself and the little Ariguccio, and to hope for better times, concluding with protestations of love, vows of eternal constancy,

How sincere these professions might have been, it is difficult to determine, since their non-fulfilment is not always conclusive of that they were made with the intention of breaking them.

The facts, however, stand thus: that, with the exception of this one letter, whether Troilo was fearful of compromising himself by holding communication with Florence, or whether every feeling of love, honor, or compassion for his victim was extinguished in his breast, she received no farther tidings from him, and it may be readily imagined in what a state of misery and anxiety she lived. It was only after the lapse of several months, when the enemy were encamped below Florence, that she learned, through the medium of some prisoners, that Troilo was in camp, bearing arms under the Prince of Orange. Then the unhappy girl began to open her eyes to the extent of her misery; she felt that Troilo was traitor to her as well as to his country.

"To be so near," she thought, "and not send me one line — one word. If I were he — if I were in his place, I would find a way!"

Laudomia, who had conceived the same suspicions long before her sister, endeavored however to conceal them, and to make all possible excuses for her reputed brother-in-law; and, sometimes carried away by her own wishes, she could not be willing to believe him so base and miserable a villain. Although in this Laudomia was deceived, since it is not possible to conceive a viler piece of chicanery than that by which he had betrayed Liza, still, perhaps, he was not born to be such a wretch; perhaps he might have possessed the seeds of many virtues, had they not been suffocated by a passion more dangerous than all others, — vain glory. This plausible and, at the same time, most fallacious guide, often conducts men to the very opposite of what it promises them, and it is, above all others, the besetting sin of shallow brains.

Under the influence of this braggart spirit, this empty boasting, Troilo, for his misfortune, had been from a child, and finding himself at an early age in the company of men who greeted vice with applause, and virtue with contempt, he yielded to the influences about him, not so much from his own love of evil, as from his unwillingness to be outdone by his companions. The betrayal of Liza was arranged and carried on solely that he might boast of having won a wager. It is true he loved her at first (or rather, not to profane the word, he was pleased with her beauty), and, perhaps, left to himself, he would never have perpetrated such a deed of villany; but, goaded on by his companions, who derided him for having so much respect for a *popolano*, a daughter of a *Piagnone*, he barbarously sacrificed to a wicked vanity, the honor of

unhappy girl, and the peace of an honest and virtuous
ly. Now, that the reader knows these sad circumstances,
will go back to where Niccolò was seated among his
le, as we described him in the beginning of the preceding
ter.

CHAPTER X.

Niccolò having ended the conversation he was carrying on in an under tone with Castiglione, the conversation became general, turning upon the affairs of the government and the course to be pursued, as, here under the influence of Niccolò and the *Frati* of S. Marco, all measures of importance were concerted previous to their public discussion.

We mentioned in chapter five that Cocchi was beheaded for having uttered language favorable to the Medici. Messer Ficino Ficini, having fallen into the same error, was taken, put to torture, and condemned to the same death. The sentence was to be carried into effect just at this hour, by torch light in the court-yard of the prison, and this was the subject of the conversation between Bernardo and Niccolò. In a few moments an usher from the Signoria knocked at the door. Being admitted, he entered, and, addressing himself to Niccolò, said, "His Excellency the Gonfaloniere notifies you that the head of Messer Ficino has just been struck off; he died like a good Christian." "Very well," answered the old man, without the least discomposure. But the rest of the company, and most of all, the women, were horror-struck at this announcement, and all, speaking at once, anxiously asked why he was put to death.

"One enemy the less for Florence," answered Niccolò, "he had the temerity to say publicly that Florence would be better under the *palle* (the Medicean device) than under the democracy, and he who shows himself a traitor in words, will not be slow to come to deeds." All bowed their heads in silence. Fra Benedetto raised his eyes to heaven and drew a long breath. The two young girls, letting fall their hands upon their work, looked at each other in consternation. Ferruccio walked away from the fire, and throwing himself upon a chair, he said, "Had we crushed the *head* of the serpent, as we now seek to crush his tail, the city would not now be at such a pass — but men often atone for their errors with their lives, and the people with their liberty. If, at the time of the invasion of King Charles in '94, Piero and his adherents, and three

years afterwards, Ippolito and Alessandro had been not driven away, but put to death, much bloodshed might have been spared. The citizens of Pisa call us blind on account of the columns of S. Giovanni — they have other and more cogent reasons for calling us so. We could not see that the safest prison for the Medici was in San Lorenzo.”* At these words of Ferruccio, which had but too much truth in them, all remained silent and thoughtful for some minutes. Meantime the hour arrived in which the family were accustomed to assemble for the evening prayer. Niccolò arose and turned to Bardo, who, understanding his wishes, went out and soon returned with a large company of workmen and apprentices employed by Niccolò, who were in the habit of joining in the family devotions, and who knelt silently and reverently on the threshold. The old man took from a chest a prayer book, and handing it to Fra Zaccaria, he said, “More than once in times less sorrowful, has our glorious Fra Girolamo performed the service you are about to perform; how often, here in this very room, has he said, ‘My son, the chastisement will come, it is meet that affliction cometh, that war cometh, but after that, *Florentia renovebitur!*’ The first part of the prophecy has been verified, let us now pray that God would grant the fulfilment of the second, that this people may obtain peace and liberty, and that its defenders may achieve a glorious victory or meet an honorable death.” “Amen,” answered Fra Zaccaria, and taking the book, he fell on his knees before the image that held the ashes of Savonarola, the others kneeling about the room. After the usual supplications, he prayed for the souls of those who had lost their lives in the siege, and particularly for Baccio. At the name of his son, Niccolò was seen to clasp his hands in fervid prayer, and raise his eyes to heaven, full of placid resignation. Fra Zaccaria, moved by the words just spoken by the old man, felt more than ever stir within his soul, the thoughts of God and his country. From continual practice, extemporaneous speaking was easy to him, and no one more than he, had received from nature the gift of the bold and stirring eloquence of the times, and the disposition to make use of it. His voice increased in volume as he drew to the close of his prayer. When it was ended, without moving or interrupting himself, he continued, “No, thy words will not be dispersed to the winds, O! glorious Fra Girolamo, and the enemies of those that trust in God shall become dust and ashes. *Exurgat Deus et dissipentur inimici ejus!*” Be-

* The church in which were the tombs of the Medici.

hold, thy prophecies are already fulfilled! The hand of God already weighs heavily on unhappy Florence. Now is the time to cry to the Lord, to scatter ashes, to perform penances. Now is the time to arm ourselves with fortitude and constancy, to obtain the verification of the promise of *mercy*, as has been verified, the prediction of *misfortune*. Let us turn to our only King and Lord, Jesus Christ. Remember, Lord,* this people has chosen thee for its sole king. Behold how thine enemies already come to take from thee the kingdom, to seat themselves on thy glorious throne! Be thou the shield of this people, who desire none other than thee! Art thou not the mighty and jealous God who wast wroth against Israel, when she asked a king? Art thou not the same that said to the prophet Samuel, '*Non enim te abjecerunt sed me, ne regem super eos!*' Art thou not that God, who, willing to extend a last act of mercy to the ungrateful Jews, said to them by the mouth of the prophet, '*Et constituet, sibi tribunos et centuriones, et aratores agrorum suorum, et messorum segetum, et fabros armorum et curruum suorum. Filias quoque vestras faciet sibi unguentarius, etc.*' Are not these, then," he continued, "thy threats against those who strive to take away thy kingdom? Judge, then, O most High, between thyself and thy people; and since they fight for the sake of obeying thee alone, that they may not have to bow the knee to Dagon and to Belial, fight thou then with us, save us from the swords of the Amorites and the Amalekites, '*Exurge, exurge Domino,*' and let thine and our enemies be dispersed."

These words, uttered in an almost prophetic spirit, powerful, because coming from one who fully believed in their truth, drew from all present a murmur of approbation. Niccolò, who still felt his blood boil in his veins, like that of a young man, at the name of Florence and the Pallechi, pressed the arm of Ferruccio, and said, trembling with emotion, "No, by heaven, those cursed tyrants shall not re-enter Florence so long as yon stalwart young men live; so long as I live, the Lily shall not give place to the Palle. For our enemies without, the sword; for those within, the axe and the block! Well did our Fra Girolamo teach us, in the conspiracy of Bernardo del Nero, how to deal with the traitors in our midst! They wished for war, let them have it, and their vile blood be on their own heads!

"War to the death!" repeated Ferruccio with ferocity, "eternal hate and malediction upon all the Pallechi! With

* The Medici were hardly expelled from Florence, when the Consiglio Maggiore voted to have Jesus Christ, king of the Florentines.

this," striking upon his sword-hilt, "I would that I could cleave the heart of every mother's son of them, within and without the walls!"

Niccolò and his sons, and Castiglione, answered these blood-thirsty words by a sad smile. Fra Benedetto thought, sighing, Alas! that I should live in such sad times! The features of Fra Zaccaria had momentarily testified approbation of Ferruccio, but their expression soon changed, and he cast down his eyes, and was silent. Poor Liza felt as if she had received a dagger-thrust in her heart, and frowning angrily on Ferruccio, she was just on the point of saying to him, "One can be a good citizen, without the spirit and language of a butcher!"

But the divine Laudomia, who read what was passing in her sister's heart, knowing how much she must have been wounded by such expressions, and fearing, too, that in opposing them, she might fall into some imprudence, took courage, and anticipating her sister, said in her own quiet way, "Messer Ferruccio, I also love my country, and I hold myself a good citizen, I also hope that your swords, aided by the favor that God promises to the cause of justice, will save our city from the hands of the Medici, and all other tyrants; but though I believe it lawful to a Christian, ardently to desire to be freed from those who seek to oppress him, though I believe it a permitted, and even holy work, to repulse with wounds and death the enemies of our country, I do not find that our Divine Redeemer has permitted us to hate them, to enjoy their tortments, to rejoice in their death, from the love of vengeance. Do you not say the Pater Noster, Messer Ferruccio?"

Ferruccio and the others, remained without knowing what to answer to these words of mercy; and, indeed, to oppose to them one good argument, was no easy matter. Fra Zaccaria, who, though all on fire for his political opinions, was at the same time an upright and rigidly virtuous man, and in whose mind, thoughts similar to Laudomia's had arisen, though he had not given them utterance, said, turning to Fra Benedetto, "What we, ministers of the gospel, ought to have said, has been said by Laudomia. God often speaks by the mouth of innocence, His blessing be upon thee, my good maiden."

Laudomia blushed and was silent, and Liza, taking her hand, pressed it secretly to her lips, mutely thanking her for having so justly divined her thoughts. Niccolò remained as if absorbed in deep thought. At this moment, the passions of party, the hatred of the Palleschi, cherished for so many years, could hardly sustain themselves against the sublime meekness that spoke in the words of his daughter. He approached her,

laid his hand upon her head, and said, "Blessed be thou, dear, good Laudomia." Even the fierce Ferruccio (so great and invincible is the power of goodness) drew near to the young girl, and regarded her for a few moments with an air of respect and admiration, then he said bluntly, "You talk well, Laudomia, but in this every-day world, with all these pardonings, very little would be accomplished; if an enemy is on his feet, you must throw him down if you can, and when he is down, you are not to trouble yourself to raise him from the ground; for he who takes down a man from the gallows, may be hanged by the very man he has rescued. For the rest, I am a soldier, and not a priest, I love my country, and am the enemy of its enemies. If I could kill every one of them, I would not hesitate to do it, and that is all I have to say about it."

"I do not deny that it *may* be, that it *must* be sometimes a duty to take life," answered Laudomia, timidly raising her mild blue eyes to the hard relentless face of the stern republican, "but may not one at the same time, weep over the sad necessity that leads us to shed so much blood? Ought we not to feel pity instead of hate, towards our enemies? Ought we not at least to pray for those, who, dying, leave behind disconsolate wives and mothers, for those who, as well as we, have immortal souls to be saved or to be lost? You, Fra Zaccaria, have just said, that now is the time to render ourselves worthy of the mercy and forgiveness of God. Think you not, that instead of indulging in this hatred of the Palleschi, and gloating in the images of their palpitating limbs, we should better deserve this mercy, by lifting our souls to God in prayer for them? We may indeed ask God for strength to repel them, for strength to defend ourselves from their attacks; but in showing ourselves good citizens, let us not forget that we are Christians!"

At these words, as if moved by an irresistible power, Fra Zaccaria, first, and then all the others, even to Ferruccio, fell upon their knees. The voice of the priest, was not as before, loud and sonorous, but low and full of humanity. "God of goodness" he said, "*ex ore infantium et lactentium, perfecisti laudem*; a maiden has given glory to thy name more than we who are thy ministers. Hear now this our prayer; save thy people from the violent hand of the wicked. But, since these wicked men are more miserable than ourselves, since they declare themselves thy enemies, and deny thy holy name, remember that they are our brethren, that all are thy children, that thy blood was shed for all; infuse into their hearts a *sense of justice*, into ours, a spirit of meekness, grant to them thy for-

and white, shone like satin, and seemed to court a kiss. The poor mother threw herself down by the side of the cradle, careful, however, not to awaken the sleeping child, and giving way to the emotions which, throughout the whole evening she had been constrained to shut up in the depths of her heart—she wept without restraint. Gradually she became quieter, and she said to the child, who, just then awaking, opened its eyes and began to use its little hands, now playing with one foot, now toying with its mother's chin.

"Poor Ariguccio, my pet bird, thy mother's darling, do you know—they have prayed at last for thee—they have prayed for thy father also." Then turning to Laudomia, she said, "Do you know I was on the point of revealing every thing? When Fra Zaccaria said, we pray for our enemies, the Pallechi, I was within a hair's breadth of saying, we pray then for my husband."

"Indeed," said Laudomia, "I know not what to say to you, several times I felt myself almost persuaded that the time for the disclosure had come, but it is so difficult to know what would be best."

"The more I think of it, the more I repent not having done so,—you see what a life of suspense we lead, it is not possible to endure it much longer, besides, to one of my disposition, you know how insupportable is this continued artifice—this concealment—this dissimulation. I was a coward not to seize the favorable moment when their hearts were a little less hard than usual. If I had only spoken then, it seems to me they would not have been so very much exasperated against me, unless they would falsify their very words and their prayers."

Laudomia participated only to a certain degree in the hopes of Liza, her clear discernment telling her not to trust too much to a moment of excitement, and that it was not to be expected that hearts indurated in hate and vengeance, should so soon and so completely change, so she said to her sister,—

"My dear Liza, as to that, God alone knows what would be the consequence of such a disclosure; for myself, as I have never attempted to advise you since the first time I spoke to you upon this subject, so neither do I attempt to do so now. All I can say is, that whatever you may resolve upon, I shall always be ready to assist, support and console you, as long as my life and strength shall last. You know that I live in your love and that of my father and brothers, and that I know not and cannot comprehend other joy than that of being loved, and of contributing to the peace and happiness of those who love me."

It is Laudomia thought, perhaps, in her secret soul of Lamberto, when she pronounced these words, but not daring to allow her thoughts to dwell on him, she concentrated on Liza and the rest of the family, those affections that craved an object on which to rest.

Touched by her tenderness, Liza throw herself on her sister's neck, saying, "I do not believe that the angels have hearts any different from yours. If I only had listened to you that morning when I came back from church—for after that, it became every day more difficult. Why was it, do you think, that this evening, on the contrary, I felt so strongly impelled to confess all, to reveal every thing?"

"God sometimes," answered Laudomia, "puts into our hearts what is best for us."

"Well," said Liza resolutely, "I will do what He inspires me to do. Surely, by to-morrow's time, the words that you have spoken, and the prayers of Fra Zaccaria will not have vanished from the memory of our papa; he will be content to punish me for having had so little regard for him, for having married without his knowledge, but he will not deny me that pardon, which, but a few hours before, he has implored for his enemies; he will not disown me for his daughter, he will not banish me from his house because a Pallescan has become his son-in-law. And then we will throw ourselves at his feet, with Ariguccio, and we will pray to him as one prays to God; God does not deny his pardon to any one; will *he* be able to deny it to me?"

Hope is a disease, if the expression may be allowed, that is easily caught, even when it is fallacious. Laudomia suffered herself to be persuaded that, after the first outbreak of wrath, things might be gradually and quietly settled.

Liza, seating herself beside the cradle of her boy, took him in her lap, and baring her bosom, presented it to the child, saying, "Take thy food, my child, God grant that when thou art grown, these unhappy feuds may have passed away! The child fed eagerly, and its mother said, smiling, "Leave me a little strength for to-morrow, my darling, — but God will give it to me." The eyes of the little one gradually closed, its mother rocking it in her chair, humming a lullaby song, and soon it was fast asleep. Meantime, Laudomia, standing behind her sister, combed her long locks, and then arranged them in a cap for the night.

Mona Fede, shuffling about in her slippers, was preparing the beds for the young women, and placing Ariguccio's cradle beside that of Liza; *she had been listening attentively to the*

discussion between the two sisters, but the conclusion to which they had come, was anything but satisfactory to her. Remembering the part she had taken in Liza's affairs, already seemed to have earned the wrath of Niccolò and of the whole house, so when they had ended, with many sighs and deprecating shakes of the head, she began to grumble while she went with her preparations for the night, "God grant that it all turn out right. Tell every thing—that is soon said. But, what if it turn out just the other way? To be sure we have to be cautious, and we live in constant danger of being found out; it is true, but so far, we have gone on very well, and some way or other, in some way or other, we shall get out of this predicament; but, at any rate, for the love of God, do not tell me that I have had any hand in it—that I have been—you know yourself, I have done nothing about it."

"No, no, I will not say anything about you," said Liza, smiling at the terror of the poor old woman.

"I tell you what it is, you have a great deal of courage; you can tell Messer Niccolò to his face, I am the wife of a saint. Oh, holy Virgin—only to think of it! He is a great man, and a good, honest man, every body says he is a saint—upon some points, he is too much like a wild beast—I have been in this family a long time, and I have seen him as often as I never saw him, so that he would have made even Signor Giovanni tremble. When it has to do with this deviltry of the Giglio (Lily, device of the republic), and the Palle (device of the Medicean family), then look out for yourselves. I do not pretend to understand what it all means, but this I know, that when Signor Lorenzo was living, and the Florentines showed the *Palle*, corn was never seven livres a bushel, nor wine eight or nine florins a barrel, as it is now. Well, the rich men and signori have their whims, but I have nothing to do with them. But as I was going to tell you about Messer Niccolò, and what a fury he gets into sometimes. At the time that the French came here in '94, that was long before you were born, the French Generals of the army used to make love to the ladies of Florence. A certain Gascon General, one of the enemy, was tempted repeatedly to take his stand here, under the window of Madonna Fiore, your mother. One day, the master returned home, and here, just before the hall-door, he found the General standing as usual. I can tell you, with two words and the look he gave him, the General was glad to provide himself with other lodgings. In short, you had better have a care what you do."

"Fede, let me alone, I am resolved, and you know I do not change."

"Eh! I know it—I know it too well. Enough, God grant that you have judged rightly. But ever since the lions* fought and the lioness was killed, what with one thing and another, nothing has gone right in Florence or in this family. I have always heard the old folks say, that there could not be a worse omen for the city—and, last night, when the air was still, we heard, even at this distance, the roaring of that great lion that came with the giraffe, as a present from the Sultan to Sig. Lorenzo in '88. The poor animal knows well enough why he cries after that fashion."

"I, too, know why," answered Liza, "and I can tell you at once: he cries because he is hungry; now, that asses' flesh is worth a carlino† a pound, he must fare poorly. Hark! hark! if he is not howling now."

The three women suddenly stopped their chattering, Liza ceased rocking, even Fede held her breath, all listened eagerly. At this late hour, the city hushed in quiet, and the house standing high, and not far from the palace of the Signori, behind which was the enclosure for the lions, they could distinctly hear the deep, harsh roar of these beasts, that, from the straitness of the siege, as Liza had rightly conjectured, were suffering the pangs of hunger. But while the poor women were all ear to the distant roaring, a sound, terrible and near, the voice of Niccolò, burst upon their ears, as knocking upon the door, he cried, "Open, wicked woman!"

* At the time of the Republic of Florence, lions were kept at the public expense, and great care was taken of them in honor of the Marzocco, (a lion of stone on the corner of the palace of the Signori,) one of the city devices. The populace held many superstitious connected with these lions.

† A small coin.

CHAPTER XI.

AMONG the many laws and ordinances by which the Republic of Florence was maintained, there was one, which, notwithstanding it had been established for the protection of institutions, was not unseldom prejudicial to the very free it was designed to secure, and constantly gave birth to the worst effects. It was called the *tamburagione*, or impeachment. In order that every citizen might have a secret, sure and always accessible way of accusing to the magistrates those who conspired against the state, and, at the same time, to secure the accuser from detection, when the accused was powerful and formidable, small boxes called *tamburi* were placed in different parts of the city, having an aperture in the cover, into which might be slipped letters or papers; the keys of the *tamburi* being kept by the government.

Whoever wished to place in the hands of the government an accusation against a citizen, threw it into a *tamburo* (or box for impeachments); first, breaking in two a silver grosso,* keeping one-half himself, he enclosed the other in the letter of accusation, so that, if afterwards he chose to make himself known, he had the means of doing so. These *tamburagioni* were of very little advantage, if, indeed, they ever effected good purpose, and they often became the instruments of malignity, hate and vengeance of cowardly and despicable men.

Messer Benedetto de' Nobili was one, who, among others, if the reader remembers, had plotted with Malatesta to use means to force Niccolò to accept Troilo for a son-in-law, and had played his cards so skilfully, that he had succeeded in discovering where Liza's child was concealed. Thereupon he wrote a letter in accordance with his design, and threw it into the *tamburo* affixed to the Palace of the Signori, on the Doge's side, which letter came into the hands of the Gonfaloniere (

* A piece of money worth about three pence, English.

duccio on the very evening of the events we narrated in a preceding chapter. The letter ran thus :

" MAGNIFICENT LORD,

" Whereas it has come to the knowledge of certain citizens, who have at heart the good of their country, and the well-being of the republic, that there are those who inform themselves of the movements of, and hold secret communication with, the enemies of the name and liberty of Florence, they consider themselves bound to give information of such proceedings, to those in whose power it lies to remedy the evil. Know, then, your Magnificence, that cause of suspicion exists against Messer Niccolò de' Lapi ; and it is believed that his rigor against the Pallesean party is a mere pretence to color designs prejudicial to this government. The foundation of such suspicions rests in the known fact, that, many times before the commencement of the siege, at night, and by a gallery that looks upon the *Via del Conte*, was secretly admitted into his house, Troilo degli Ardinghelli, a rebel, to whom Niccolò has married his daughter, Liza ; and to keep the connection strictly private, and not awaken the suspicions of the people, he now has carefully concealed in the upper apartments of his house, a child, born of this marriage. There are those who assert that they have seen Troilo enter the house by night, even since the assault began, though he is known to be in the service of the Prince of Orange, and fighting with the enemies of Florence. (If this was false, and no one knew it better than Messer Benedetto.) Now that your Magnificence is informed of the state of the facts, you may judge what may be inferred from these measures, conducted with so much secrecy, and whether they comport with the part of a good and loyal citizen. At any rate, we were unwilling to fail of warning you of that *qua bene valuit*."

Upon reading this accusation, Carduccio was thunderstruck. Niccolò, his friend, the man upon whom suspicion had never lighted, to believe him a traitor ! to believe him capable even of assassination, he could not bear the thought ! For a moment, he was completely unmanned ; then, the good opinion he had always had of the old man, rose victorious in his breast, and he resolved to show him how fully he trusted in his good faith. Ferruccio happening to be present just then, he folded an envelope, in which he enclosed the letter, and sealing it, he begged him to carry it immediately to Niccolò with this message : "The Gonfaloniere sends you this letter, that you may see in what esteem he holds you." His design in making use of Ferruccio instead of a servant, was, that whatever alteration might take place in the countenance of Niccolò, on reading an accusation so enormous, it should be seen only by a friendly, prudent person, who would keep the affair to himself. Ferruccio went immediately to the house of the Lapi, and, being

admitted, not without some surprise on the part of Niccolò seeing him return so soon, he placed the letter in his hand repeating the precise words of Carduccio.

Niccolò opened the letter, read it, and remained an instant motionless, and without speaking. He then arose, and approaching the light, he rubbed his eyes and his forehead, looked sharply at Ferruccio, as if to assure himself that he was really awake, and began to read the letter anew. The second reading ended, satisfied him that all was not a dream. His first thought was, that it was a tissue of lies, invented by some enemy, to bring him into discredit; and well for him that it was so, for, had it been possible for him to believe in the truth of any of the statements, the blow coming when he was utterly unprepared for it, he would probably have fallen dead upon the spot.

Two or three times he essayed to speak, but the words died in his mouth; finally, making every effort to conceal from the eye of Ferruccio, the tempest that was boiling in his breast, he prayed him to thank Carduccio for his favorable opinion, and briefly, but courteously, dismissed him from his presence.

He then turned to his sons, who alone were in the room, and with a glance that made them tremble, said, in a tone which no one in the house dared reply, "Let no one presume to leave this room till I return; I will soon know if there are traitors under this roof." The three young men, astonished and disquieted, looked at each other without uttering a word. Niccolò, taking a light in his left hand, walked to the door; he passed Vieri, he snatched a dagger from the young man's side, crossed the threshold, and began to ascend the stairs. Arrived at the first landing, he stopped a moment to collect his thoughts, then he flung from him the dagger, which slid from the top of the stairs to the bottom.

When he reached the door of the chamber where his daughters slept, he stopped again, and listened a few moments, then applying his eye to the key-hole, the unhappy old man was at last certain of his shame. Liza was suckling her infant. At this sight the light of his eyes wholly left him. With closed fist he struck twice on the door with such force that he almost started it from its hinges, and in a voice that seemed rather the roar of a wild beast, sent forth that cry that we have previously narrated, "Open! wicked woman!" Two or three seconds passed, and no one opened the door. Niccolò, with one tremendous thrust, forced open the already shattered door, entered and stopped in the middle of the room. The two young women, frozen with terror, were white as two statues of marble.

the old man was dumb, and, seized with a convulsive terror, he fixed upon Liza two eyes of flame that seemed to consume her as if she had been of wax. "It is true, then!" he cried at last, with a howl that was heard distinctly by his sons on the lower floor, and, transported by the first violence of his feelings, he hurled against his daughter the most horrible words of vituperation that ever have been showered on the head of a lost woman. Lamberto fell flat on her face, and weeping piteously, she seized the hem of her father's *lucco*, but he twisted himself away from her grasp, like a serpent when his tail is crushed; and the terrified girl fell upon her arms and forehead prostrate to the floor. Liza, with her head between her knees, for at Niccolò's first knock she had placed the baby in the cradle, never moved. After the first outbreak of fury, the old man stopped a moment to take breath, and then he went on: "Tell me, hellish woman, my eternal disgrace, and the disgrace of my whole family, could you not kill me first, and then do what you have done? Were there no knives in Florence? Was so much required to destroy the life of an old man of ninety? Could you not be satisfied to first take his life, and then give yourself soul and body to the enemy? Take away my life? What have you taken away but the honor preserved unstained so many years, intact until now? When I had one foot in the grave, you, wretch, have thrown mire upon my head — on these hoary hairs that should have been the glory of my children, which should have been *your* honor, shameless wretch! And if you were incapable of holding the dagger, why did you not entrust the work to your ribald sgherro — it were fit deed for a gentleman, a Pallescan, a corrupt courtier of the Medici, to stab an old man in the back! But the traitor knew that he could do worse for me! By the Holy Cross, I will let him know the mistake he has made in leaving Niccolò alive, and it shall not be long before he repents of his error! Averardo! Vieri!" The young men, who were listening in suspense, ran at Niccolò's call, who, handing them the letter he had received from Carduccio, exclaimed, "Who among us, will hereafter dare to raise his eyes to Lamberto's face, that honorable, good and most unhappy young man?"

"Unhappy," he continued, "I am a fool; on the contrary, I will have reason to thank God, to consecrate himself anew to his service, for having saved him from a connection with this miserable, worthless being, who has sold himself to a real traitor, a traitor of the blackest dye! Out of this house!" he cried, with a voice constantly growing louder, "out! this very *moment*, you and this child; go! carry him

to his father; tell him he may thank God that I am neither gentleman, nor Pallescan, nor courtier, for if I were — that you have done well to escape alive out of my hands. But it was God, who did not permit me to bring the dagger."

While Niccolò went on thus, Laudomia, still prostrate, ceased not her sobs. She attempted to embrace his knees, which he would not permit for a moment, but constantly thrust her away. The brothers, seeing their father in such a paroxysm of passion, dared not come near him. Liza, who, without moving, or opening her lips, had listened to the very end, to the abuse which had been heaped upon her, shuddered, on hearing the word *traitor* applied to her husband, and the natural daring of her character came to her aid, like a spring where the greater the pressure, the greater is the recoil. She raised her pallid brow, fixing upon her father a despairing but steady gaze, and falling on her knees just where she was, she said:

"Will you permit me to say a few words before I leave this house?"

Niccolò answered: "Speak, and be quick."

"If you *had* killed me, I well deserved it, I cannot deny. I know I have committed a great error: I have failed in that obedience which I owed to you, and after the evil was done, I know I ought to have confessed everything. Laudomia, who is here present, and who knew nothing of the affair until it was consummated, counselled me to do so, but I was unwilling to take her advice. All the guilt, then, is mine, and it is right that I should bear the penalty; and whatever you have said, or may say to me, or whatever may be the punishment you have prepared for me, I will receive it all, blessing your hands, and acknowledging that I have justly deserved it. But, though you may be lord and master of me, you are not of the honor and name of Troilo, who never was a *traitor* to any one."

"I hope to have patience to hear you to the end," said Niccolò, with a bitter smile.

"On some points he can compete with the whole world," said Liza; "if he be of the Pallescan party, he is what his ancestors were, and that means nothing else, than that he understands things differently from what the republicans in the city do. And it would be a thing too enormous, to say that all the citizens without the walls were traitors."

"Vile beggar! dare you thus blaspheme your country in the house of Niccolò, and think he is fool enough to bear it? When you ought to hide yourself in the earth, and die of *shame*, or thank God and me that you yet see the light, you *are* shameless enough to talk, and defend yourself, and almost

to pretend that you have been good and virtuous; that your lover, forsooth, is an honest man, and not a traitor, who comes with armed hands against his country. Ah! I know at last, what a viper I have been cherishing in my bosom! Cursed be the hour that your mother conceived you, to my eternal disgrace. But to whom do I talk? I have borne too much already. Away! out of this house!"

To finish these words, to spring upon Liza, and drag her by the hair of her head to the door, was the work of a moment.

The sons, moved by compassion for their unhappy sister, then interposed, and released her from her father's grasp.

"Come," said Vieri, who was of a quiet turn, and one of those characters, who cannot bear to hear disagreeable things discussed, "come, of all things, one ought to keep the peace, and it is sufficient that she go away, if you do not wish to have her in the house."

"Oh! my father," interrupted Landomia, "it is true, we have committed a great fault, but God ever pardons those who repent, and who plead for mercy. If that which most offends you, is, that she has married a Pallescan, have you not, only three hours ago, prayed for them, and if *you* do not pardon, how can you ask that God, excuse me, papa, that I am so bold, how can you ask God to pardon you?"

"Presume not to dictate to me, simpleton," vociferated Niccolò, "I am not to learn of you, what I ought to do. See now, how the girls must be suffered to be corrupted by the Palleschi, just by listening to your senseless prate! Look to yourself, — mind your own affairs! And you," turning to Liza, "take that child and begone! Go, with the misery, that God will surely bring upon you!" The poor young woman, who all this time lay on the floor, thrown there like a worthless shred, her dishevelled hair, covering her face and shoulders, and convulsive sobs bursting from time to time from her breast, raised herself with great difficulty. "God is just," she said, in broken words, "God is just. He, and not you will have to judge me. And He will see if I have deserved to be treated in this way. As to this, I was to blame, it is true, — but he is my husband, not my paramour, as you said. I have not sinned. As to his being Pallescan, — oh! this, then — but God is of no party; I am confident He is neither Pallescan nor Piagnone. He curses — oh! yes, He curses these factions — these hates — these party feuds."

"He curses impious children!" cried Niccolò, "children who disobey, who dishonor those who gave them birth, who bring misery upon their old age, and hurry them to their



graves, and *you*, wicked one, will live to see the truth of what I say!"

At this point, the terrified Laudomia, her mind and senses almost distracted by the terrible scene of which she was spectator, and by the horrible malediction heaped by the old man on the head of her unhappy sister, had no longer power to utter a word, but with groans and tears, she embraced the knees and kissed the feet of her father, and becoming almost frantic, she clung to his garments, striving to move him to pity. But the unhappy old man was, not figuratively but actually, *beside* himself, and devoid of every ray, every spark of reason, he pushed her away with such violence, that she fell headlong on the floor. At first she experienced a violent pain in the head, and then swooned entirely away.

The sons of Niccolò, seeing the cruel, mad act of the old man, his distorted face, the hair bristling on his ghastly forehead, his paleness, the trembling of his limbs, and the wandering of the pupils of his eyes, and thinking he was about to lose his senses entirely, as he had already given signs of having lost his self-control, pressed around him, and with submissive and humble words, using, at the same time, a little gentle force, they led him to the door, preceded by his unhappy daughter. She, with her weeping child in her arms, descended the stairs, and without once turning, went into the street. Meantime, the cloud, that had momentarily shrouded the intellect of Niccolò, was dispersed. He disengaged himself from the arms of his sons, closed the great door with violence upon Liza and her child, drew the bolt, and without speaking a word, went into his own room, and turned the key in the door. It was near midnight. Impelled by the chilly north wind, a pouring rain swept slantwise across the street, along which poor Liza wandered blindly, now stumbling in the darkness, now plunging into the puddles of mire and water with which the streets were filled, pressing her child closely to her bosom, and heaping the clothes in which it was wrapped, over and around it, her only care being to protect it from the cold and wet. She endeavored to find her way by keeping close to the wall, and to direct herself, (both hands being engaged, she could not feel her way,) she raised her eyes from time to time, and followed the line of the roofs, though in the general obscurity, they were so little darker than the sky, that it was difficult to distinguish them. Thus she wandered on a long distance, and, for a time, the idea of her present situation, of the suffering and danger of her innocent child, banished or *destroyed* every other thought. The feeling, that, should she

sink exhausted, her little Ariguccio must in a very short time expire on the ground from cold and exposure, brought back the strength which she already felt was failing. She prayed to the Lord from her very soul, then, reflecting what course she must take, she decided to go to the house of a relation, who had always shown her great kindness, and who lived near the Porta San Friano. Little accustomed to these streets, especially in the dark, and in her perturbed state of mind, she soon lost her way, and no longer knew what street she was in. She stopped a moment to recover herself and collect her ideas, and calculating the distance she had travelled, she concluded she was in front of the Duomo, whence, by the course of the Adimari, she could direct her way towards the Arno. But, leaving the wall to which she had kept close all the way, and going forward, thinking she was in an open square, after a few steps she ran against the wall of a narrow street, for, without being aware of it, she had turned behind the archbishopric, and, instead of Calimala, had gone towards the Porta Rossa. Then, having lost all notion where she was, she felt, that with her hopes, her courage and strength were fast ebbing away, and she began to weep bitterly; and, amidst her sobs, she raised her feeble voice as loud as she could, and called, "Help! for the love of God!" But no window opened; no light appeared. "Oh! my God, my God!" said the unhappy woman, pressing her child to her bosom, "that he should have to die thus in the midst of Florence!" Again she called, and her cry ended in a deepening groan. All in vain. Then she revolved rapidly in her mind the causes of her present distress; she reviewed the unhappy feuds of the times, the prayers offered that very evening, the party rancor of the Piagnoni, and she cursed them, she cursed her country! — but her grief had changed to phrenzy. She deserves our compassion. She felt oppressed for breath. A cold sweat started from every pore. Her blood seemed to chill in her veins. Her limbs utterly failed her. She sank down under the shelter of the wall. A mortal torpor invaded her frame. Her senses became gradually obscured. It was not sleep, — it was not a swoon, — but a compound of both. She had remained in this state some time, when, fortunately for her, she was discovered by the patrol headed by Cantella, by whom she was cared for in the manner we mentioned in chapter seventh. If he had felt an interest in her at first sight, it became so much the greater, when he had heard her story. He offered to assist her by all the means in his power, at the same time asking her what she intended to do. But she knew not what to do. To go to her relatives, as she



had thought of doing when she found herself alone and abandoned by all, she could not make up her mind to do, for it was a family of rigid Piagnoni, as were all the connections and friends of the Lapi; and, besides the fact that these divisions were now more than ever abhorrent and repugnant to herself, she was uncertain, whether upon her marriage with a Pallescan becoming known, she should not be met with reproach and upbraiding, rather than with hospitality and kindness. Though fallen so low, her mind revolted at the idea of presenting herself at any door as a guilty suppliant. She answered then to Fanfulla, that if God and he did not aid her, she knew not what would become of her. "There is one way," she added, "and the most effectual one, to relieve my present distress, and that is, to conduct me to the camp to find my husband."

"Eh? girl, to the camp! That would be a fine plan. In the first place, by proclamation of Signor Malatesta, no one is permitted to stir out of Florence without orders, and surely it would be no very easy matter to conduct a pretty wench like you with a baby which, if it took it into its head to roar — then good night — No, no, we must leave that for the last." Poor Liza's eyes filled with tears, when she found the way cut off, by which she might rejoin him who still reigned supreme in her heart. She sighed and was silent. Fanfulla reflected a few moments, shook his head thoughtfully as he revolved the matter in his mind, and then said:

"Courage! for a little while, until he arrives. I have decided. Come with me!"

He took the child in one arm, and supporting Liza with the other, they went out of the guard-room. The day was just beginning to dawn, and in a few minutes they stopped before the door of a cottage in the Via Larga. After knocking eight or ten times, the door was opened. "Wait here a moment," said Fanfulla, entering the house. He soon reappeared, and led Liza into a mean apartment, where she found an old woman of meagre aspect, but with a benign expression of countenance, who received her with great kindness and compassion. It may be imagined, how much the poor young woman stood in need of comforts of every kind. Few indeed could be obtained here, but such as were to be had, were offered with kindness, and in this extremity, it was necessary to assist her to lay herself and child on the low pallet of the good woman. Liza blessed God that she still had milk enough to quiet the child to sleep; and, when she found he was *slumbering*, her own excessive fatigue, gradually overcoming the *senso* of her misery, she was soon herself wrapped in a pro-

found and placid repose. Fanfulla left immediately on ascertaining that his *protégés* could find a shelter here from the storm, for, indeed, it promised little else, assuring Liza that she should see him again soon. When he had reached the street, he walked along with head down, and hands behind his back; he shook his head now and then and whistled a tune, then he burst into a loud laugh, and said:

"Now, that Captain Fanfulla has thought proper to make himself cavalier to this lady, and has promised to provide for her, let us see a little, if he has done right, and how he is going to manage to pay the butcher and the baker. He must not forget that the country is besieged, and if the scarcity does not increase, which seems almost impossible, at least the price of grain is increasing every day. Come, it is your turn, answer."

The answer of the good Fanfulla to his own question was another hearty laugh, and he said:

"Indeed, everything comes upon me! Ugh! if it was only the time of the sacking of Rome!" but immediately punishing himself by a smart blow on the mouth, he remembered that from the time of that very event until now, he had never ceased to inflict chastisement upon himself to atone for the evil deeds of that day. He counted in his hand what little money he still possessed, the residue of the pay he had received from Signor Malatesta. The poor fellow had given the greater part of it to Liza's hostess, for her maintenance, reserving hardly a third part for himself, but the provision for either party would hardly last a week. Thinking the matter over again and again, an idea struck him, which was indeed a tremendous one, for it drew a groan from him, as if he had been transfixed by a dagger. He writhed, he combatted, he repelled, he drove away this thought, and quickened his pace, hoping to leave it behind him. But the tormenting idea buzzed in his brain; it would give him no peace: driven away here, it reappeared there: and though it was exceedingly painful to him, it had nevertheless in itself an attractive power so irresistible, that it triumphed at last, and poor Fanfulla was fain to yield. Now do you know what this thought was? Nothing more nor less than to renounce the *mestiere a cavallo*, as he said, no longer to be a cuirassier, but to place himself in the infantry, and sell his old horse Grifone! There are no such hearts as Fanfulla's, in this our age of egotists! Such was his pity for Liza, and it was such a point of honor with him never to fail of his word, that, finding no other way, he was forced to come to this decision, though it was above all others, grievous and painful. Despondingly, with downcast head, he pursued his way, and in the furrow of the scar which

parted his cheek, descended slowly a certain moisture, which in any other person would have been called a tear. But Fanfulla, who would have thought of his weeping? He went to the stable where he kept his horse, and as he stood looking at him, he thought, "Who will be willing to buy this poor creature?" He turned away from his old companion, to whom it seemed to him now that he was about to become a traitor, and walked straight forward to the quarters of the company of Sig. Amico d'Arsoi. In the skirmishes which took place every day, there were always some horsemen who had their horses shot under them. Fanfulla offered his horse to one of these; and although he was fully resolved to make this enormous sacrifice, there still remained in his heart, a faint hope, that he should not be able to find a person who would be willing to purchase so miserable a beast. But in times like these, purchasers do not stand for trifles, and one of the corporals was willing to pay him thirty ducats for the animal. Our poor friend took the money, and quickly put it in his pocket. He took from his pocket the key of the stable, gave it to the purchaser, and directed him to the place where the horse was to be found, all, without looking him in the face, and turning away, he sighed and said to himself, "It is done." This sum, which in ordinary times would have served Liza several months, in consequence of the high prices occasioned by the siege, would not last for a quarter of that time. Another circumstance was now added, which made this small sum of money melt away still more rapidly. Liza became ill.

Agitation and suffering had preyed upon her system, and she was attacked with a raging fever, which for two weeks never left her; and when, by the assiduous cares of the old woman, a worthy physician, and more than all, the good Fanfulla, she became convalescent, she found herself with but very little strength and less money. The old woman, her landlady, had nothing for herself, of course, then, she had nothing to bestow. Fanfulla, with no other resource than the pay of a common soldier, did what he could, but if this was enough to preserve life, it was not sufficient to supply the demands of nature. And poor Liza, knowing that Fanfulla was denying himself the comforts of life for her sake, concealed from him her own sufferings, and the necessity of better and more abundant food, which her habits, her youth, and her returning health most urgently demanded; in fact, the daughter of Niccolò, born and brought up in ease, and in the abundance of every good thing, experienced now for the first time the terrible pains of hunger. Fanfulla became acquainted with the old woman to whose care he had intrusted Liza, when he was in San Marco; her name was Niccolosa, she

lived near the convent, and her business being that of washing and mending linen, he had often carried her the altar-cloths and other napery of the church. Believing her to be an honest, kind-hearted woman, he had asked shelter there for Liza, which was readily granted, and she was well-treated as long as the money lasted; but when that was gone, the poor old woman was reduced to such extremity, that her own sufferings took from her the power of feeling pity for others.

She came one day into the miserable chamber which Liza occupied, and with a sad face, but with great kindness of manner, told Liza, that as to lodgings, she was welcome to remain there, for she should not think of turning her into the street, but that as to food, she must provide that for herself. "And how am I to provide food?" thought Liza, sighing, who, for many days had subsisted on a most meagre morsel of bread, composed of more bran than flour, and who beheld, almost consumed, the scanty store with which she had already provided herself. Clothes or jewelry had she none, that she could pledge for food, for she had issued from her father's house in a state of utter destitution. In so much misery she was, alas! not alone, she had an infant who derived its sole sustenance from her! The poor little Ariguccio, whom we described so beautiful, so plump and rosy, had undergone a sad change in the lapse of a few weeks. His limbs, once so round and firm, were now flaccid and emaciated, and the skin so well-filled and so beautifully transparent, now hung loosely on his wasted frame, and swayed with his every motion. Every day the anxious mother, as she dressed and undressed her child, viewed it over and over with eyes full of tears: every day it seemed to have pined so much, every day she would think some little bone was more protuberant, and less covered than the day before. And indeed though this wasting was not so rapid as maternal solicitude imagined, it was nevertheless real and constant: and in consequence of this extreme emaciation, the lack of proper clothing, and the consequent impossibility of changing its scanty garments, the tender, delicate skin of the infant had become red, and almost lacerated in many places.

CHAPTER XII.

THE unhappy mother watched anxiously and tremblingly, the progress of these symptoms, giving vent to her feelings in tears and in kisses, which she imprinted by thousands on this miserable little creature, and which one might almost have expected would have power to restore it to its former health and beauty. But the virtue once resident in the breast of the mother, grief, want, absolute hunger, had entirely exhausted. The horrors of her expulsion from her paternal home, her terror, the cold of that first night, had suddenly checked the flow of the fount of the child's sustenance, and her subsequent manner of living was ill calculated to restore it. The child, never satisfied, cried incessantly, and the poor mother, deprived of all aid, of every mode of quieting it, held it all day to her breast. But even this was of no avail, the child finding it empty, ceased its useless efforts, and detaching itself from the breast, relapsed into a feeble and disconsolate moaning. On the evening of the same day in which Niccolosa had come to her with such words of sadness, the unhappy young woman, then alone in the house, felt more feeble, more ill than usual. The abortive but ceaseless effort to suckle her child had utterly exhausted her. A severe pain in her chest prevented her from drawing her breath freely, and from time to time it seemed to her that she should suffocate.

Seated beside the window, with her child extended upon her knees, as, languid and prostrate, it was sleeping, or rather lying in a state of stupor superinduced by the decay of the physical forces, she watched the twilight gradually fade away, thinking with terror of the impending darkness of a long winter's night. Having no means of procuring a light, she was constrained, when night came on, to go to bed; and these endlessly long hours were passed in darkness, without being able to close her eyes, and in the unavailing endeavor to find some means of quieting her wailing infant. The very thoughts of their recurrence made her shudder, and this was, perhaps, one of the most severe trials of her present condition.

Now, she raised her eyes to the gray sky that was fast be-

coming more and more obscured, now, she let them fall wearily and despondingly on the attenuated form of her child, and listened to its breathing, which, it seemed to her, was gradually becoming more frequent and more labored. She thought she perceived that the extreme pallor of the skin was gone, and that it was overcast by a livid hue, especially about the lips, and she rose up in terror, but, hoping that these appearances might be the effect of the imperfect light, she took her child, and bringing its face close to the window, she saw that this lividity was indeed no illusion; its little lips were of a dark blue tinge, the half-closed eyes opened, and the pupils wandered for a moment and then disappeared under the eyelid. The miserable mother uttered a cry of anguish; she believed the last hour of her child was come. She laid it carefully on the bed, hastily loosened its clothes, and trembling with anxiety, with anguish and uncertainty, she began to rub it, and with the palms of her hands, with her breath, and without being conscious of it, with the tears that streamed in torrents from her eyes, she strove to bring back the vital warmth. Then, trying other means, she threw hers-elf down, with her mouth on that of the child, covering it and warming it; then she let fall between its lips a few drops of her milk, which she had with difficulty pressed from her breast, but the sweet joy of seeing it swallow, that she would gladly have bought with her life, she had not; she rose up almost frantic, she wept the bitter tears of despair, and clasping her hands convulsively, or in her anguish tearing her disheveled hair, she said:

"Oh my son! Oh! idol of thy poor mother! Oh! do not abandon her—No, no, no! Oh! if he could only look at me! Oh God! I have nothing in the world but this my poor little angel, and he, too, is going to leave me! Oh! my Argencio—look at thy poor mother! Oh! smile, dearest! Oh! only to see that dear little mouth smile once more, and then die! Oh! God! God! take everything from me, all and everything—but my son, my love, my life. Oh! no, it is not possible. Thou wilt not do it!"

But the child, motionless and scarcely breathing, gave no sign to awaken a shadow of hope. The unhappy Liza dried her tears; with her glazed eyes fixed upon her child, she remained mute and motionless; but, in the meantime, what the cares, efforts and tears of the mother had not been able to do, was accomplished by nature herself, and the convulsion which had assailed the child, gradually subsided.

Liza perceived the very first indications of this blessed change. *She saw the natural color return, the eyes becoming*

serene, the lineaments composed; silent, trembling with an increasing agitation she watched these changes; but when she saw her baby's lips open with a smile, there was such a burst of joy, such a weeping and laughing at the same time, such an intoxication of her delight, such her internal commotion, that no longer able to support herself, she fell on her knees beside the bed, and, covering with kisses, the knees and feet of her child, she said:

"Oh, God! I knew it — 'twould have been too much for poor mother, for a wretched woman — wretched? Who says I am wretched? That I am poor? My darling has come back? He looks at me, he smiles! I have seen him smile — I am happy I am rich — I am too highly favored, I ask for nothing more, I desire no other good, no other love. Oh! Ariguccio, thou hast almost killed thy poor mother! Oh! naughty one! — no, no, naughty — angel, angel of paradise, thou hast now given me new life." These words, not sufficing to give vent to the violence of her feelings, she was relieved by a flood of tears, the kisses and caresses which she lavished upon her child. Meantime it was dark night.

When the tempest of so many emotions was quieted in the heart of Liza, she began to reflect upon her condition, and upon the danger, things continuing thus, of a recurrence of the calamity by which she had just been menaced. Mater's love conquered the terror which she felt, at the very thought of her father, and she resolved to go to him immediately, to supplicate for the support of her child, to obtain it or die at his feet.

Ariguccio was sleeping. She made over him the sign of the cross, arranged the pillows so that if he moved, he would be in no danger of falling, kissed him, and went down softly groping her way into the room on the lower floor occupied by Niccolosa.

"For the love of heaven," she said, "lend an ear if Ariguccio should cry — I shall be back immediately."

The old woman began to chide her for going out alone; but it was useless, Liza was already out of hearing.

The night was dark, the streets deserted, scarcely a shop open, and the feeble glimmer of the lights within, barely served to keep her from losing her way. Liza glided along with rapid step, keeping close to the houses. In a few minutes she was at the hall door of the Lapi, which she now saw again for the first time since her expulsion. At this sight she wept. Drying her tears, she planted her foot on the lowest of the steps that led to the threshold, then her heart failed her,

she had not strength to raise her hand to the knocker. She saw lights in the windows of the lower room, occupied by Niccolò, and stepping upon the marble bench that extended along the front of the building, she managed by clinging to the iron grating, to raise herself so that she could look within. There was no one in the room but Niccolò and Laudomia, he, in his great arm-chair by the chimney, she, at her work-table, both silent and motionless, both showing in their countenances traces of what, by one ignorant of the circumstances, might be equally attributed to some great mental calamity, or to recent illness. Liza, who knew the first, suspected the second, and she was not mistaken.

We said at the close of that terrible scene, when Liza was driven from her home, that Laudomia lay on the floor in a swoon: restored to consciousness by the efforts of her serving-women, she was able with difficulty and not without assistance to reach her bed. Seized already with fever and delirium, her life was in danger for many days, and for many more she was confined to her bed, and this was the first evening that she had been able to go down into her father's room.

And with him things had gone but little better. But of spirit and constitution more indomitable, he had not been willing to keep his bed, to have a physician, or to see a living soul. The sons who had ventured a few words in behalf of Liza, he had sent away: to Laudomia alone, he bore himself as usual; but with the express condition that she should never allude to the subject; every one being forbidden, under pain of his displeasure, to contribute relief in any way to the wife, as he said, of that *Pallacan traitor*.

Laudomia, however, when hardly sufficiently recovered to be able to connect her ideas, knowing that it must be done without the knowledge of the old man, had combined with her brothers to search out Liza, if they should have to go the world over. And, to tell the truth, they had turned Florence upside down, but with no success; and Laudomia, more than all the others, was completely disheartened.

Liza gazed intently now on her father, now on her sister: the grief, the melancholy of both, their silence, their immobility cruelly pierced her heart. "See, of what thou hast been the cause!" said she to herself, "see to what a state thou hast reduced thy father, an old man — thy sister, that speechless angel! And canst thou hope that God will not do the same to thee? Canst thou hope that He will leave to thee the consolation of thy child?" And here, overtaken by the thought *that divine vengeance was perhaps about to strike her in the*

life of this child, she could no longer restrain herself, and a sob broke from her so loud that both Laudomia and Niccolò heard it.

"Who is crying there?" said the old man, rising and going to the window; he opened it. Liza, on seeing her father move, overpowered with terror, had descended from the bench, and prostrating herself on the pavement, she said:

"Ah! papa, for myself I ask nothing — I deserve nothing — but my unfortunate baby — how is he to blame, that his mother is a wretch? — If his" — (poor Liza had just presence of mind enough not to name Troilo at this moment.) "Oh! papa! my poor unhappy baby! I no longer have any sustenance for him — I have no strength, no breath, no life — hunger, papa! hunger! Oh God! if you could but know what hunger was! and to see a baby die of hunger!"

As Liza ended these words, she raised her trembling head, thinking it impossible that Niccolò could be so cruel as not to be moved to forgiveness. Already she imagined her father at the window in an attitude of compassion. On the contrary, the window was closed, the light had disappeared! The wretched woman was almost on the point of dashing her forehead against the stones, such was the utter despair that took possession of her.

Niccolò had no sooner become aware that it was his daughter, than he drew back from the window, not, however, losing a single word. Laudomia, without uttering a syllable, approached her father, and, weeping silently, embraced his knees. But the old man forced her to rise, and pointing to the door said, in a tone which he meant should be severe and threatening, but which he did not fully succeed in making so:

"Laudomia, I change not; go away, go up into your room, I will have it so, I command you!"

Not being promptly obeyed, he repeated the order, and this time in a tone, which no one of the family ever attempted to resist. Laudomia went out, covering her face with her hands. The old man stood listening, and when he heard the sound of Laudomia's footsteps dying away in the distance, as she slowly ascended the stairs, he went quickly into the pantry, placed in a napkin as much bread as it would hold, went to the great door, opened it, left the provision on the threshold, closed it and drew the bolt. Poor Liza, hearing the door open, raised herself immediately from the place where she was lying, and with all the haste that her feeble powers would allow, and all the anxiety *that can be imagined*, approached, hoping to be received into the house, but she arrived at the door, just in time to hear the bolt

pushed through its rings, and she saw upon the ground the bundle of bread. So much humiliation, such an accumulation of misery, had completely prostrated her, — she no longer had strength to weep or groan. She sat down on the threshold, and taking up a loaf in her hand (she was dying of hunger), she began to eat it with avidity. Extinguished now, or rather suspended, all sense of her moral woes, she could only think of her bodily sufferings, and she sighed as she said :

"How refreshing, how restoring would have been a good fire, and a little wine, so chilled, so weak as I am!" Laudomia, in the meantime, had no sooner ascended the stairs, than she descended without a light, and without shoes, hoping noiselessly to elude the vigilance of her father, and to reach Liza. Peeping down into the entry, she had witnessed the proceeding of Niccolò ; she saw him stop, after closing the great door, and remain with his eyes bent on the ground for some minutes, which appeared centuries to her. Then he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand, and at last re-entered his room. Laudomia darted to the door, softly drew the bolt, went out into the street ; it was dark and deserted. She took a few steps, and then called in a low tone, but as distinctly as she could, "Liza ! my dear Liza !" No one answered. "She cannot so soon be out of hearing," she said to herself. "Oh ! if I only knew which way she has gone !" To have her so near, and not be able to find her ! And if I do not make use of this opportunity I may never have another. I will call louder, happen what may," and the good Laudomia called twice, in shriller tones, the name of her sister.

A voice, not feminine, but strong, masculine, and close beside her, answered her with, "Who can be calling Liza in the streets at this hour ?"

And soon, close upon her, came a soldier on horseback, who drew his bridle, just as the terrified girl sought refuge in the door of her father's house. She entered, and did not close the door, but turned back hesitatingly ; for, her first panic over, it occurred to her that the voice was not new to her. The horseman advanced, dismounted and said, "Laudomia, are you seeking Liza in the street at this time of night ?"

"Oh, Lamberto !" But she could say no more, for this unexpected apparition came upon her like a thunder-stroke. She had indeed longed for his return, even after the unhappy affair of her sister, because, though she knew how painful it would be to tell him the whole story, still the idea of Lamberto's return reassured her. She felt as if she should then have a guide and a support ; he would know how to find

remedies, where no one else could. He could give counsel and encouragement, when every one else had given up in despair. But, quickly brought back to the thought of Liza's present condition, who, in the meantime, was rapidly receding from her, she summoned all her resolution and said, speaking rapidly, and with great earnestness —

“Lamberto, God has sent you to us. Liza was here but just now — she cannot be far off — Let us seek her — I cannot tell you more now — If a moment is lost — Oh, Lamberto! let us go — you shall know the motive — but let us go immediately.”

Lamberto, a thousand miles off from the truth, felt, however, a painful sensation on hearing these strange words; he knew there must be something serious at the bottom, but he was stout-hearted and discreet, and without further inquiries, he followed the young woman, who, feeling safe in his company, resolved to search until she found her sister. They turned toward the Duomo, and at every step they called Liza by name. But before narrating the result of this search, it will be well to say a few words of the affairs of Lamberto from the day when he issued from the house of the Lapi. At this time, the war was raging between Charles V. and Francis I. The state of Florence which, from ancient custom, followed the fortunes of France, had in the French camp, one of its citizens, the most renowned and valiant soldier then in Italy, Giovanni de' Medici, captain of those famous bands which, after his death, were called the black bands (*Bande Nere*.) Lamberto proposed to place himself in his school, and he had a letter from a citizen, a friend of the Lapi, which highly recommended him to the Florentine Captain. Known as he was in Lombardy, where it was already rumored that the Germans, under the command of George von Frondsberg, were making a descent into Italy, through the valley of the Adige, he took his way through Bologna, Parma and Piacenza, by easy journeys, that he might not be unfit for service on his arrival. After a few days, he found himself at Milan. The town and the duchy were held by the Emperor, and they were full of armed Germans and Spaniards, as far as the banks of the Adda. On the other side of the river, the French army was quartered in the towns and suburbs of the Ghiara d'Adda, and Giovanni with his bands, was, at this moment, at Rivolta, with a part of his people, the rest, he had scattered from Vailà to Casirate.

Rivolta is situated not far from the left bank of the Adda, three miles below Cassano, and here is a bridge, which Lamberto was to pass, but it was guarded by a large body of Imperialists, who, seeing a man-at-arms coming from the enemy's camp,

would, without doubt, have stopped him. It was necessary then to find some other way of crossing the river. The most expeditious, and, at the same time, the most dangerous way, was to ford the Adda over against Rivolta, and Lamberto decided to do so, saying to himself, "It will avail me much more than the letter, with Sig. Giovanni, if I can arrive at the camp, giving some token of my prowess under his own eyes." So deliberating, he left Milan one morning in the latter part of June, in high spirits, on his good horse, now quite restored from his journey, his arms and equipments all in excellent order, and passing freely through many troops of soldiers, who supposed he belonged to the Imperial party, he found himself, soon after mid-day, where the country, no longer under cultivation, was covered with wood, and the soil becoming gravelly, indicated the vicinity of the river. He followed the road as it wound among thickets and copsewood, now stony, now sandy, and coming to a little elevation, he saw in the centre of a broad bed of dry, white pebble-stones, descend swift and limpid the waves of the Adda. Beyond, on the campanile of Rivolta, he saw floating the banner of Sig. Giovanni, the *Palle* of the Medici. This sight could not but offend one born of the democracy of Florence, and Lamberto, gnashing his teeth, and giving the spur to his horse, thought, "Pity that I should have to fight under that device." But soon recollecting that the Medicean branch, to which the brave captain owed his origin, was a decided enemy to that which had so long oppressed Florence, he drove away these disagreeable thoughts and continued his way.

Knowing, however, that here was the place of the greatest danger, (since in time of war, as every one knows, to pass the lines which divide friends from foes, is always considered a suspicious act,) and, expecting to meet some detachments of Imperialists on the watch along the river, he fixed himself firmly in his saddle, grasped his shield more closely, and with his lance at his side, was all eye and ear as he rode along, that he might not be taken unawares by some of these straggling look-outs. His preparations were well-timed. He had just emerged from the wood, and had not advanced ten steps on the bare sands, when he heard behind him a crackling of branches, and, turning at the sound, he saw rush from the thicket, three crossbow-men, and two helmeted soldiers on horseback, all making towards him on the full gallop. He had observed on the opposite bank, a large number of soldiers of the company he was seeking, and among them, two mounted officers of noble presence, who now appeared to be looking on and awaiting

the result of this rencounter. Lamberto thought in his heart, "Now, if that person were only the Sig. Giovanni," and this hope redoubled his ardor and even his strength, and he said, between his teeth, "One against five, it is a good opportunity—Now, God aid me!" One of the men-at-arms getting in advance of the others, hailed him, "Who are you, and with whom do you stand?"

"With no one," answered Lamberto, without turning aside or slackening his pace. "On whose side?" demanded the other, placing his lance in rest.

"Long live Signor Giovanni, long live Florence, and perish all traitors!" shouted Lamberto, so loud that he was heard on the other side of the river, and a hundred voices repeated the same cry: but in uttering it, the young man planting his spurs in the flanks of his steed, rushed upon his adversary, and hurling his lance in front of his saddle-bow, he wounded him in the ribs, and leaving him, as cringing with pain he seemed about to fall, he turned to the others. It was fortunate for him, that in this gravelly spot, full of flint-stones and masses of rock, the horses were not easily managed, so that all were not able to set upon him at once, for, in that case, he would certainly have been soon overpowered. Brave as he was, and dexterous as he might be in avoiding their blows, to defend himself against four, was no easy matter. However, in a few moments, they were reduced to three; for Lamberto, in this sharp encounter, had seen one of them fall, without knowing, in the multitude of blows he had dealt, which had proved effectual. Thus fighting and skilfully eluding the thrusts aimed at him on every side, Lamberto neared the river, hotly pursued by his adversaries, and hearing the cry from the opposite shore "*dagli, dagli,*"* he would have been cut to pieces rather than yield. However, he learned, at last, that to utter this challenge alone, among so many, was to presume too much upon his strength, and his good fortune.

Watching his opportunity, he plunged into the river, leaving two of his enemies on the shore; but the third, more prompt, followed quick upon him, so that both horses were soon in water up to their breasts, the adversary of Lamberto, coming close upon his horse's heels. The brave young man aimed a thrust at the cavalier, but could not pierce the corslet with which he was protected, but the force of the blow was so great, that the blade flew in pieces, the percussion against the ribs of the horseman, was communicated to his horse, who could but ill

* Give it to him, give it to him.

support himself before on the slippery bed of the river, and both horse and rider went down with a tremendous splash, and a loud shout from the shore applauded this fine stroke of Lamberto. Some arquebusiers of Sig. Giovanni had, by their firing, put to flight the enemy remaining on the bank, and Lamberto had now no one to contend with but his opponent in the river. He soon saw emerging from the water, a long way off, the head of the fallen horse, who was now swimming for his life, while, at a few feet from him, floated the cavalier, who seemed to have lost all consciousness. Though Lamberto, but a little while before, would have willingly killed this man in open fight, it was extremely painful to him, to see him drown before his eyes; he turned the bridle towards him, urging on his horse, while the soldiers of Sig. Giovanni, suspecting his intentions, cried out with the greatest vehemence, "Let him drink!" Fortunately for him, he was not in the thread of the current, but in a space where the water, beaten back by an angle of the shore, flowed in an opposite direction, so that Lamberto could easily reach him, and seizing him by the straps of his corslet, he dragged him along, while he urged his horse across the stream. This, in the middle, was deep and rapid, and the poor beast being forced to carry double weight, the charity of Lamberto had well nigh proved fatal to all three. However, without losing his courage, Lamberto seized with his left hand, the mane of the horse, whose head was barely out of water, and animating him with voice and heel, he succeeded at last, with but little deviation, in reaching the opposite shore. Lamberto was received with great rejoicings by the soldiers who had witnessed this exploit, and several of them waded into the water, to help him out and relieve him of his burden, which they laid half dead on the bank, with many jokes about the fine *sturgeon* he had fished up. At this moment, a young man rode up, of proud aspect and athletic frame, wearing a leather jerkin, with a shield on his arm bearing the device of the six balls on a shield of gold. All reverently made way for him, and he, coming close up to Lamberto, who, dripping with water, while drops of blood were trickling from his shoulders, had dismounted from his horse, said bluntly, but with a pleasant smile, "Who are you, who have dared to contend against five in my name?" "Mine is too low and humble, not to be new to your Excellency," said Lamberto, delighted beyond expression to find that he had been observed on this occasion, by the Captain himself; "but I have a letter here from Messer," (here he gave the name of the writer,) "which, if the water has not wholly ruined it, will inform your Excellency who I am, and how great is my desire

to become instructed in this distinguished and most admirable school of Italian military science."

So saying, he unlaced his corslet, and drew from his bosom a paper, which the water had in a great measure spared : Giovanni took it, saying,

"As to your coming here to be instructed, it would seem there is little occasion for that; but however, we will see."

While Giovanni de Medici was reading the letter, Lamberto had an opportunity of gratifying the desire he had always had of seeing face to face this brave and renowned nobleman; he admired his noble presence, his bold and skilful horsemanship, and he gazed upon him with that impassioned veneration which every generous soul that yet thirsts for glory, feels at the sight of one so distinguished for great and honorable enterprise. He could never have hoped a fortune so friendly as had been shown him in this rencontre; and finding himself established at once in the good opinion of his new companions, and well-received, and even praised in their presence by such a man, he felt a degree of felicity too great for him to comprehend. With palpitating heart, eyes moist with emotion, and face flushed with a trepidation, all the more beautiful in one who had just given proof of so much bravery, he stood immovable, waiting till Giovanni had finished reading.

"You were with Messer Niccolò," said Giovanni, at last, raising his eyes to his face, then with a frown, he added, striking with his right hand on his shield, "with the greatest enemy of this escutcheon!"

Lamberto was so fascinated by the presence of Giovanni, that he felt at this moment ready to renounce the cause of democracy, and Niccolò with it. But his soul was incapable of a base act. He hesitated a moment, then modestly, but courageously answered,

"Your Excellency, Niccolò is a republican, he loves the liberty of Florence; he is only the enemy of its enemies."

"And, therefore, he cannot be a Pallesco. Well, Lamberto, you have spoken like a brave man as you are." And then he added, laughing, "henceforth, neither am I a Pallesco; Pope Clement would entrap me if he could, and so would I him. You have shown yourself such, that this letter might without loss have been sunk in the Adda. Captain Puccino, enrol this honest fellow in your company, and this evening come with him to supper in the castle." Thus saying, he turned his horse, and putting him into a gallop, he took the road to Rivolta.

CHAPTER XIII.

CAPTAIN PUCCINO, under whose command Lamberto was now placed, advanced to conduct him to his quarters. "Come, honest fellow," said he, "what drops from your back? It is not clear water, by any means."

"It is nothing," said Lamberto, "a mere scratch here on my shoulder. Let me first give a look at that bow-man I have taken prisoner, and see if he be dead or alive." Proceeding to the place where he had been laid at first, he found the man in the midst of a ring of soldiers; but though he was sitting up, he had by no means recovered his strength and spirits.

While Lamberto in the river was trying to drag this man to the shore, these soldiers, seeing his danger, and the difficulty of his task, said among themselves, "This fellow will fare like Francisco Sforza, who, trying to rescue one of his pages who was drowning in the Pescara river, was drowned himself." Seeing, then, that the young man came off safely and with honor, one began to shout, "Hurrah! Sforza!" and another "Bravo! Sforza!" and "Welcome Sforzino," and the custom of giving nicknames being then very prevalent in Italy, particularly among the soldiers, this epithet *Sforzino* was fastened upon Lamberto for life. But, as it commemorated an honorable incident in his career, he heard it not unwillingly.

"Come here, Sforzino," said one of the soldiers, laughing, "this time you are entitled to the ransom of a prince."

Lamberto advanced, looking to see what sort of a princely personage they had got there. It was a little stout man with a round, foolish looking face, hair and beard white as carded flax, and as to his arms and clothing, they were of the poorest description.

"Come friend," said Lamberto, smiling himself, "let us hear who you are, and what your name is."

"I, signore, am a poor Swiss soldier," said the man in very broken Italian,* I came into Italy with Captain Altsax, for I

* The translator despairs of rendering the broken Italian of "poor Maurice," which the author makes so amusing, into broken English as amusing, and therefore does not attempt it.

thought that here I should drink much good wine, but, on the contrary, I have had to drink much water." Then he went on to tell them, that he was from the canton of Zurich, that his name was Maurice Schuber, that he could not pay his ransom, because he was *pofero soldate* (poor soldier), but he declared himself willing to follow as a servant, always, him, who, besides having vanquished him, had saved him from that *cursed water*, which he detested so much.

Lamberto opposed this, telling him that he was not rich, and that his pay was not sufficient to support them both; but the Swiss, protesting that he could never free himself from the immense obligation he was under to him for saving him from a *watery* death, of all others the most dreadful to him, and that he was resolved, at all events, to follow the fortunes of his deliverer, and Lamberto, detecting in his broken words, a frank, loyal simplicity, having also, by recent trial, satisfied himself that he was a brave man, and one who could second his arguments by force of arms, if occasion required, resolved to accept him.

"Captain Puccino, I am ready," said Lamberto, turning to his guide, and all three set off to the barracks, while some of the soldiers, rallying Lamberto as he passed along, shouted "Hurrah, Sforzino! you have made a great bargain; instead of getting a ransom, you will have to pay the expenses of this poltroon!"

The castle to which Sig. Giovanni had invited Lamberto and Captain Puccino, was about three miles distant. It stood on the brow of a declivity partially covered with trees, and above the level of the stagnant water, remaining from the inundation of the Adda, which the farmers, long disheartened, if not ruined by the war, had had neither time nor means to drain. Around the castle, many poor peasant houses, most of them thatched with straw, formed a little village called Casirate.

Captain Puccino, Lamberto and servant, arrived at the castle at about three o'clock in the afternoon, and all dismounted (for the soldiers, out of sheer compassion, had restored to the Swiss his horse) in the courtyard. This was an irregular inclosure, composed of edifices of various forms, surrounded by a fosse, and commanded by a square massive tower that crowned the brow of the hill. Here was the lodging of Sig. Giovanni de' Medici, or, to use the modern term, his head quarters.

After Lamberto had doffed his wet garments, and had the slight wound on his shoulder properly dressed, he was conducted into a large hall on the lower floor, where a table was *laid for about thirty persons*, — for the Sig. Giovanni, a sumptu-

ous and liberal man, always kept open table for his officers. He received the young man with the cordiality of an intimate friend, shook hands with him, and, turning to the Castellan Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Baron of the country, and several officials who were already assembled for supper, he related to them the adventure at the ford of Rivolta. From time to time other guests arrived. Huge platters of salad were then brought in, (for in those times the meal always commenced with this dish,) and all seated themselves at the table. Whoever wishes to have a complete picture of Giovanni de' Medici, has only to add a pair of chestnut whiskers to the head of Napoleon, and place it on a tall, robust body. It seemed as if Lamberto could never be satisfied with looking at him, and then, eyeing one by one, the others who were seated at the table, and noting the bold, stern countenances, robust limbs and martial air of his new companions, he felt so delighted, and his delight was so pictured in his face, that Puccino, guessing his thoughts, said, "Eh! Sforzino! What do you think of it? I tell you, you may boast of having supped to-night with some of the bravest men in Italy. See, this one on the right of Sig. Giovanni, is Orazio Baglione, son of Pagolo, and brother of Malatesta, who has been a little time with the Venetians. The other on his left, that little fellow with eyes like pepper-corns, is Ivo Bilotti. That other is Sagramoro de' Bastelica. This one, you must know *him*, is our Laurentino, Cecchino del Piffero, as we call him, but he is one of the *Colli*. His brother is the famous goldsmith, but this one can handle the dagger better than the graver." Lamberto now perceived, that, among those at the foot of the table, was seated a woman, whom, dressed as she was in man's attire, and very much in the same style as her companions, he had not at first noticed. Observing her minutely, certain tresses of black hair were revealed under a crimson cap, which was fastened up at the rim and set jauntily on the side of the head; her forehead first, not fully concealed by a double striped with black and crimson, plainly revealed her sex. Her face would perhaps, have betrayed the fact, for it might have belonged to a handsome youth of eighteen. The rapid and wayward motion of her eye, the unstrained length, and a certain impudent look of her nostrils and features, showed her to be anything but a modest woman. Upon a more minute and continued observation, her features seemed from time to time to assume another character. Her glance fell languidly, and with a kind of sinister expression, and her countenance; the rosy pouting lips were firmly shut, concealing two rows of teeth of dazzling whiteness, and becoming *pale and thin*, they appeared to express feelings of an

entirely different kind, and of far greater intensity than at first; contempt, scorn, wrath and grief, at the same time. And then, when least expected, an expression of wild and immoderate joy would be painted on her face — one would have said that two souls inhabited by turns the same body.

Lamberto, indicating her with his eye, said to Puccino, smiling, "And *this* handsome young man, too, is one of the first braves in Italy?"

"That young *woman*, (I see you are a good sportsman, and have quickly unearthed the fox,) would not be afraid of the whole of us, with arms in our hands. She is the strangest creature you ever saw: man, woman, soldier, courtesan, *this*," he continued, smiling, "this she is more than anything. But you never know where to find her; now she belongs to all, now to none; now she laughs, lives merrily, and makes noise enough for a whole company; now, if you just tell her what handsome eyes she has, she will answer with a torrent of abuse; now she is very civil, and then again she is as perverse as the devil. I say she is a little crazy. Some people will have it that there is some great mystery at the bottom, (but it is not known how it has leaked out,) they will have it that she is — that she may be — but what do I know? People talk so much. But for myself, to look her in the face, I think there must be gipsy blood there. But one thing is certain, she is half-crazed, if not wholly so."

By this time, il Signore Giovanni, who never could endure to sit long at table, rose, and, together with the greater part of his guests, went out into the court-yard. A few remained still at table, among others, Lamberto, who was listening to Puccino, and the young woman, who was laughing with her neighbors. The young man, accustomed in the family of Niccolò to the austere virtue of the Piagnoni, with the pure image of Laudomia painted in his memory, and that of Liza, sculptured in his heart, observed her for some moments, and then, though at an age when the senses are most easily inflamed, viewed her with repugnance, and, rising, prepared to go out.

"Stay here with us, Sforzino," said Captain Cattivanza degli Strozzi, who was sitting beside the woman. "Stay here, the Signora Selvaggia wishes to make your acquaintance."

Seeing then that the young man manifested very little inclination to become acquainted with her, he continued:

"Fh! you are going away? Just because you were born a Piagnone, must a pretty wench look like the devil to you? Oh! are you not afraid her breath will poison you? However, *I have heard* it said, that in Florence, after they had made

roast meat of Fra Girolamo, the damsels of the yellow veil * carried a higher head than ever, so it is no such new thing to you, after all."

Lamberto felt touched by the irony contained in these words, and, shrugging his shoulders, said, as he was making towards the door:

"The courtezans are much sinned against, and whoever —" but he could not finish the sentence, for all roaring, and shouting "Ugh! Piagnone!" "Bravo, Piagnone!" "Hurrah for the Piagnone," they effectually silenced him.

In the midst of this uproar, he turned back, for he was now close by the door, and, standing bolt upright beside the table, and fixing his eyes upon Cattivanza: without betraying the least token of the anger which he felt, he said:

"This is the first time that I have found myself in your honorable company, and, therefore, it is my duty to appear modest and unassuming, and though you have ridiculed me more than is agreeable to me, I am not disposed, even for this, to be angry with you. I will only say to you, that to have been born a Piagnone, is my boast. As to following the doctrines of the blessed Fra Girolamo, would to God that I could boast of having done so as I ought; and, to tell you the truth plainly, it is because he sought for the glory of God, the liberty of the people of Florence, while, on the contrary, his adversaries have sought to bring them again into servitude. To you it appears, perhaps, that he was in the wrong, while to me it appears that he was in the right, for all brains cannot think alike. And as to the different modes of thinking, Captain Cattivanza, I believe that the Lord has given every man a brain of his own, leaving no one unprovided, with the express requirement, that each man shall make use of his own. If it had been His intention that one brain should serve for several men, He need not have taken so much pains, but He could have filled the heads of the brainless ones with pumpkin-seeds, or something of equal value." At this, many of his auditors could not help laughing, and Lamberto, who, at first, appeared to be put down by these scoffers, was gradually regaining his former position in the minds of all.

"Since, then," he continued, "God has given me this blessed brain, let me use it as seemeth to me good. I know very well

* At the epoch of our story, women of ill-fame were required, in order to distinguish them from other women, to wear a yellow veil. Afterwards, (in 1499,) a yellow ribbon, on their bonnets; then it was worn in their hair. At last, by paying a fine, they were exempted from complying with this requisition.

that among soldiers, it is the custom to lead a merry life with as many accessories as fall in their way; but no one can say, however, that he who does not act thus, cannot be regarded as a good and brave soldier. Or, if any one does affirm it, it would be a very easy matter to convince him of his error. Now, then, since we are agreed on this point, that a man can be good for something, and yet have no connection with unhappy pleasures, you will be content, Captain Cattivanza, (and I say the same to all the honorable gentlemen who are my companions in arms,) you will be content to receive me as a comrade, ready to attend to all your just commands; but, as to my being a Piagnone, or doing this or that, I beg you would leave the care of that to me, and, in every thing else, you will have me always on your side, and ready to obey your commands." To confess one's opinions in the face of murderous weapons, is sometimes less difficult than to declare them openly in the midst of those who meet them with ridicule and mockery; by this touchstone, may be known a soul truly high and noble, and such was that of Lamberto.

"What would you have me say?" answered Cattivanza, in a tone between conviction and contempt, "you are right! That you know how to handle your arms, we have all seen; nobody will dispute that. As to the rest, arrange that to suit yourself, nobody here will interfere with you, for, by the saints, you are an honest fellow. Come here, let us drink and be friends!"

"With all my heart," said Lamberto, taking the proffered hand of his adversary, and then one after another, that of all the others. The goblets being filled, were emptied in peace and harmony, and Lamberto now stood higher than ever in the estimation of all present. Captain Puccino, who, while Lamberto was speaking with so little respect of Selvaggia and her companions, was constantly giving him signs of warning, and saying, in an under tone, "Beware, look to yourself, Sforzino!" now said, slapping him on the back:

"Thank God that you are a handsome young man—if any other had said the half of what you have said, he would quickly have known the length of that sharp blade which hangs from the signora's neck," and he pointed to a small, elegant poniard on her bosom, attached to a chain of gold.

But Puccino had not rightly judged what was passing in the mind of Selvaggia. The words of Lamberto, instead of exciting her anger, had impressed on her face that intense, profound expression of which we have just spoken. During the whole dispute, she had remained, with eyes bent upon the ground,

and without opening her mouth. At the remark of Puccino she raised her head, and, frowning angrily upon him, she said, "How do you know what I am thinking of? And how do you know whether he looks handsome to me or not? Let my affairs alone! I always thought you an ass, and now more than ever."

"Bad weather," said Puccino, laughing, and taking Lamberto by the arm, and repeating "Bad weather!—a storm brewing!" he dragged him out into the court-yard.

"Let him go and play the saint if he pleases," said Cattivanza to the woman, "and we will stay here and enjoy ourselves, my darling. Oh! bless these robber eyes. As I wish you well, let them not be the death of me." And so saying, he was about to embrace her slight figure, which attempt she answered by a blow in the face, and that not a slight one.

"Get you gone, I am tired of your nonsense," said she, rising to go away.

"Oh, look out! you, too, are going to play the Piagnone: if I ever see you making the sign of the cross—" Strozzi's reply, however, was not heard by the woman, who had disappeared, without taking any further notice of him. He also, with the others, now left the room to attend each one to his own affairs, for it was growing dark, Cattivanza muttering as he went along, "Strozzi may play the Piagnone, if he will—that is his own affair; but if this disease is catching, we must look to it."

Two days after, the camp was removed towards Mantua, with the design of making head against the Germans, under George von Frondberg, who, to the number of fifteen thousand men, were following the ancient custom of living at discretion upon the Italians. It is to be observed that in these cases, the term *discretion* means indiscretion. The bands of Signor Giovanni, in small detachments, after several skirmishes of little moment, had reached the Po, near Governolo. Lamberto, on the way, performing the duties of a good soldier, whenever the opportunity offered, and when things went on quietly, showing himself an agreeable companion, had secured the good-will of his comrades, with whom he several times pleasantly conversed on the same subjects on which he had held forth on the evening when he supped in company with Selvaggia. Meantime, she had indeed followed the army, but without riding in company with any one, or exchanging a word with a single soul. Lamberto saw her two or three times pass swiftly by him, mounted on a Turkish horse as swift and slender as a deer. She was dressed in a leather jerkin, with a javelin in her hand, and

quickly disappeared in the clouds of dust, raised by the multitude of people on the road.

One day, when some German fusileers, after a little resistance, were thrown into confusion, he saw her come out from the thickest of the fight, and passing him without stopping, she cried out, "If I am worthless as a woman, I am good for something as a man," and then she was off like an arrow.

Some days after this, the daring, but unfortunate Giovanni de' Medici, struck in the leg by a cannon-ball, was carried to Mantua, where he died. His death was bitterly mourned by his soldiers among whom, he had always been foremost, in daring as well as in rank, and, clothing themselves in mourning apparel, they acquired thenceforth the name of the *Bande Nere* (black bands), and retaining vividly in their memory, the rules and precepts of their leader, they were ever the terror of their enemies, and wherever they struck a blow, they always came off conquerors. Lamberto, who had hoped, that by following the fortunes of Sig. Giovanni, he should soon be promoted to a rank from whence he might, with honor, turn his thoughts to Liza, and who, to the admiration long kindled in him, by the fame of Giovanni's achievements, had now united a singular and ardent attachment to his person, generated by the kindness with which he had always treated him, had double cause of grief, and he knew not what course to resolve upon. Although Orazio Baglione, an officer of high standing, had obtained the command of these companies, Lamberto feared that they would be obliged to disband, or, at least, lose much of their reputation, and though this did not really happen at that time, his fears were not wholly without foundation.

He was extricated from this state of perplexity, by a singular meeting with Selvaggia. He was not so obtuse as not to see, from the first, that she had fixed her eyes upon him, and with some design, but he said to himself, laughing, "I am not the thrush for your game-bag," and then thought no more of the matter. One evening he had sauntered a little distance from the barracks, and, seating himself on the sandy shore of the Po, he watched the setting sun, disappearing behind a long row of thickly-set poplars, extending along the opposite bank of the river. He gazed, too, on the placid and majestic descent of the current of the river, which mirrored on its tremulous bosom, the adjacent trees, and the fiery glow of the west.

He was thinking of the beautiful summer evenings on the banks of the Arno, when, through the little gate, he strolled along the shore, and saw the sun set behind the hills of Arti-

He remembered, that, from these spots, turning his glance back towards the east, he had often thought how beautiful and imposing, Florence appeared in the last rays of the sun, with its dusky battlemented palaces, its innumerable towers, its bridges and its churches. He saw in his mind's eye, the great cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore, and the gilded ball, that, from afar, when the sun's rays glanced upon it, looked like a star placed on its summit: he saw the campanile of mosaic work by Giotto, the highest tower of the Palazzo, and on its top, the lion rampant of the Republic, turning with the wind, and he thought, "Thou hast bent, it is true, to many storms, but there thou art still!" Poor Lamberto, he little knew that the boast and the device were soon to fall together. This beautiful but inanimate picture, now received life and feeling from the images of Liza, Laudomia, Niccolò and his sons, and the companions of his infancy, the remembrance of words uttered or listened to, looks, motions, signs, things apparently unnoticed at the time, but which live in the heart forever; by the thought, better, but dear to him, of the poor old mother, who, at his last parting, had been able to carry her maternal love so far as to veil with a smile of hope, the resigned conviction that she should never more see her son but in heaven. He had read in her last gaze, this painful thought, and with heart penetrated by these feelings, he had also affected to feel that hope which in reality had no existence. Such memories now assailed him with a sting of remorse, and accusing himself he said, "And could I then leave her? What if thou shouldst never see her more?" And, drawing his hand across his eyes, he wept. The vault of the firmament, meantime, was peopled with stars, the last gleam of twilight faintly appearing in the west, where a streak of light, of orange hue, gave back the outlines of the pinnacles, whose tops swayed in the night breeze. Just then a footstep softly approaching. He raised his head, and saw a dark figure wrapped in a mantle, coming directly towards him. Annoyed at this interruption of his dearest thoughts, he called out, angrily, "Intrusive fellow!" He was about to make good his retreat, when the figure seated itself about two yards from him, and after a moment's silence, said in a low and humble tone:

"Tell me, young man, have you not left in your own country, a woman that loves you? — whom you love above everything in the world? Answer me, as you hope for the consolation of God; answer me truly."

The voice was that of a woman; Lamberto said to himself, "It is Selvaggia," and the idea of a courtesan, coming to mix

herself up with his pure and elevated thoughts of country, mother, Liza, made him shudder as one does, when, in the midst of fresh fragrant flowers, one finds crouched, an ugly venomous reptile.

To this feeling was added the suspicion, that her sudden appearance at this hour, and in this solitary place, was a trap set for him.

"Why do you meddle with my affairs?" said he in a stern, abrupt tone.

"Oh I do not meddle. I know I am not worthy to do so. Have I asked so much? I see I have offended you — God knows I did not mean it — But I knew not how to begin, and I must speak to you — I hoped, that by naming *her* whom you have made blessed with your love — I hoped that you might forget for a moment that I am Selvaggia, and that you would listen to me a moment without getting angry. Oh! young man! To the snakes, that crawl amid the reeds of the marshes, God denies not the air and the sun — and will you spurn with your foot, a creature who crouches before you with face in the dust, and who craves one word of consolation?"

And so saying, she actually prostrated her forehead on the ground, which was already wet with dew.

"I've nothing to do with you, whatever, Signora," said Lamberto, (more firmly convinced than ever that these excited words, this attitude, and this agitated voice was all acting,) "and if you wish anything of me, I request you to name it in as few words as may be, but do not let a word escape from your mouth with regard to any other woman — you understand me — for I cannot bear it."

"I own it; I am not worthy even to name her. Are you satisfied? Can you think of any word of contempt, that you have not applied to me? Come! out with it! Give vent to your feelings! Trample under your feet, her who comes to implore you, humbly and tremblingly as the vilest worm would do, if it had voice and mind to address itself to the Creator of the universe. Oh! exult in your prowess, in your virtue — and when you speak with your God, say to him, I thank Thee, that I am not like this woman!"

The deep persuasion which Lamberto had of the artful character of this woman, could not, however, prevent her humble words, her manner, and the sound of her voice from reaching his heart, and they awakened a feeling of doubt, a movement almost of compassion. With a milder expression of face, and a more lenient tone, he said: "As God is true, Signora, you *surprise* me! Despise you! Trample you under foot! Why

do you talk thus? Either, you must know my opinion of you and your way of life, and if so, and you do not like to hear it, why do you compel me to repeat it? or, you are not aware of this opinion, or do not believe that you deserve it, and if so, why then do you care for it?"

"It is because I know it; because I well know what misfortunes have led me to deserve it, that I do care for it. This is why I have thrown myself in — at your feet. For the first time after so many years, I have again seen the face of a man, which is not that of a brute, a wild beast? Oh! what do I say? wretch that I am. To me it has appeared the face, and the voice of an angel, that stooped even to the mire in which I grovel, and stretched out a hand to raise me! Oh! if I had met you when I was fifteen! But instead — a spirit of hell, I fully believe, entered a human body to make me his prey! Oh! young man! God alone has the right to despise and punish, and for this very reason, I believe that He has at last taken pity on my woes, and has permitted me to meet with you! But you do not know the terrible series of my wrongs. If you did, you would weep with me. Oh! do not refuse to listen to me — the tale shall not be long — a few words shall suffice — for after so many years, you are the first man to whom I have ever attempted to speak of repentance, without expecting to meet new mockery, new outrages."

"This is one of their customary stories," thought Lamberto, but having no reason for refusing what she asked with so much earnestness, he said:

"If what you tell me be the truth, Signora, speak, I will listen to you."

"If it be the truth!" And the poor unhappy creature, striking her forehead with the palm of her hand, was mute for a moment, then shaking her head, said almost inaudibly:

"Does any one believe a courtesan?" Then, turning to Lamberto, she said, "There is reason for your reproach. But you shall now see if I tell you the truth. That your contempt weighs upon me, you must have known, you cannot doubt it. However, there are things that you do not know, that I might still conceal from you, which will make me if possible, more vile, more abject in your eyes. But you shall know even these — I am not a Christian! A Hungarian Jew was my father! My father! And must I give him that name? I should say, my most atrocious enemy! Through his agency, I am where I am; through his means, I have lost country, relations, friends." Here she stopped to think a moment, and then in a mournful tone, she said, "And did I not come pure into



the world? Did I not receive from God as well as others, a heart capable of love, of virtue? Who snatched from me this treasure? Who perverted these divine gifts, that were mine, which were the portion of good, of felicity assigned me by the Omnipotent? Who" — and here she stopped a moment, looking at Lamberto with flashing eyes, then she grasped his arm, and with trembling voice and lips, she said:

"Believe me young man, if you have courage to do so! I was alone that night — alone in my chamber — my mother was no longer living — Oh! if she had been alive! — she would have protected me — they knocked at the door — I heard my father's voice — he called me — I opened the door — a man was with him — a prince by his superb dress, his proud bearing — I looked at him; uncertain, terrified — my father disappeared — the door was closed again. He had sold his own flesh and blood!

"Need I narrate the sequel of my fortunes? Virtuous, noble, generous, is it possible for you to comprehend how one could survive such horrors? How one becomes by degrees callous to to all shame, all infamy? How at last a woman can trample under foot all modesty; can have no soul but for false pleasure, no heart but to love it, to seek it, to become intoxicated by it? I terrify you? I see it — but tell me — be you my judge! Where was my defence — my aid? How was it possible to resist, conquer, save myself? Well, first betrayed, then despised, flung away at length as a vile thing, trodden under foot by all, if I sometimes raised my voice to ask for pity, if I extended my hand, hoping that a friendly soul would move to aid me, I found nothing but insult, heard nothing but mockery; every one pushed me back into the mire. My misery, my tears became the sport of every one who deigned to notice me. Oh! God of Heaven! what have I done, to come into the world to suffer such torments!

"Oh! young man! you who have never had crime to weigh upon your mind, you who are handsome, brave and virtuous, who, in the midst of peril and fatigue, can repose in the thought of your loved ones, if you only knew what it was to be born with an ardent soul, thirsting for love, and never to have been loved, never! not even by a father! If you could know this horrible suffering, you would wonder that I still preserve in my aspect, and perhaps in my heart, anything human. You would wonder that I do not rush madly, like a wild beast, on every one whom I meet of this hateful and cruel race, which has betrayed me, plunged me into this abyss of misery, and then denied me every consolation! If I could be told that

there was *one* heart in this world, that would receive me, and dry my tears — if I could be told, there is yet *one* being on the earth, that will love me, if I would only deserve it! — Oh! God of goodness! my happiness would be too great. I could not endure so much joy! I would traverse the world to find him! If I saw him on the other side of a lake of fire, I would plunge in to rejoin him! — I would embrace his knees — What would I not offer him in return for so much blessedness. What would I not do to render myself worthy of it? Oh! young man, if you only knew how little would satisfy me! Your heart, I see, is placed where it deserves to be, but you love your battle-horse, nor do you think it a wrong to — to — any one. You love your hound! Oh! after your horse, after your hound, disdain me not, if I implore one thought from you; let fall one glance on the poor Selvaggia, which may seem to say, ‘Poor forsaken one, I pity you!’

“Oh Heaven! he does not even answer me,” cried the miserable woman, and she burst into tears.

CHAPTER XIV.

BUT if Lamberto had delayed answering her, it was from a cause very different from what Selvaggia supposed. Her words, which seemed to challenge credence, had awakened in his heart a feeling of profound pity, but a lingering suspicion which he could not wholly silence, warned him to be on his guard, and not betray all the compassion that he felt. So, studying to maintain his voice firm, and his countenance tranquil, he said: "You desire compassion, Signora? Who could deny it to fortunes so mournful, and so tremendous as yours? But you are too desponding; a creature, made in the likeness of God, should not be placed on a level with the brutes."

"Too desponding? And how can you say that, when you will not even grant me the little that I ask — It would cost you so little just to say, Poor Selvaggia, I accept you for a slave; to give me one moment of blessedness, one moment of comfort, with a word that should come straight from your heart, instead of which, you tell me 'you are too desponding.' Virtue is beautiful, but oh! she is severe and proud!"

"No, Selvaggia, I boast of no virtue, and still less am I severe and proud with you. I feel your misfortunes in my very soul, and, if it rested with me, you should soon be freed from your sufferings. But what I have not the means of doing for you, God will do, if you turn to Him. I have not answered you according to your desire, for it is not in my power to grant your request. Press it no farther, Selvaggia. Think that a great soul may always exalt its own destiny; that virtue never wholly deserts man, save of his own free will and choice, and by these same avenues, it may always return. You may yet rise, if you will; may yet hope for esteem and affection in this world. I have listened to what you had to say, have said to you what I could — now we must separate — God grant you that blessedness and that peace which I implore for you. Adieu!"

Lamberto walked rapidly away, and it was time. This conversation had agitated and excited him; he perceived that, for

him, the safest part was to avoid this woman. Her beauty, her misfortunes, even her crimes and her remorse, rendered her interesting, made her a new and singular being. In fact, it was better for him to fly from her; and Lamberto, in a few moments, was at his quarters.

The woman followed him with her eye, long as the dim light of the stars would allow her to see him. When he disappeared from her view, she felt a sense of utter desolation, as if she were left alone upon the earth. "The wicked," she thought, "mock me, if I drop a word of the hell that I feel in my heart: this virtuous man, seeing me expiring in despair at his feet, bids me *turn to God*, and abandons me! Oh! God, since Thou alone knowest my sufferings, since Thou alone hearest my weeping, why, then, hast Thou forgotten me? Woe is me! Must I, then, die without ever knowing the sweet joy of being loved?" And distracted, or, rather, maddened by this idea, she ran along the river's edge like a maniac.

All at once she stopped, as if struck by a sudden thought.

"Am I sure that he believed me?" and reflecting a moment, her whole expression was changed by the newly awakened hope. "No, no! he *did* not believe me — he thought I was deceiving him. Oh! if he could have been sure that I was telling the truth, he would not have answered me thus, would not have left me so. I know him, — he is generous, he is good! then there is still hope! I thank Thee, God of goodness," and she fell on her knees, with eyes and arms uplifted towards heaven, "that Thou hast so soon heard my prayer, that Thou hast so soon poured into my heart the treasure, the immense treasure of hope. Yes, the day will come, when he will believe me! he will then see that I have not deceived him: the day will come when he will say, 'Poor Selvaggia, at last I believe you, you are dear to me. It will not be love — no — I could never dream of obtaining that. I, vile, miserable, abject creature! — The love of this angel! What woman on earth is worthy of it? Ah! yes, there must be one. Well, I will have her, I will be her servant, since she is dear to my master. Perhaps they may thus endure my presence. Perhaps I may obtain leave to stay with them, and, when my last hour shall come, when they shall say to him, poor Selvaggia is dying, who knows? perhaps he will come to my bedside, and if I have voice enough left to speak to him, I will beseech him to call me *his*, once before I die. Then, on my icy brow, I shall feel him lay his hand; he will call me *poor Selvaggia*! — then I shall hear nothing more — I shall be dead!"

Immersed in these thoughts, the poor wretch lost all other

consciousness. God knows how long she remained in this state. When she came to herself, the dawn was glimmering in the east; she recognized the shores of the Po, and the tents where the soldiers were lodged; and, looking confusedly around, she asked herself, "What am I doing here? where am I? what am I?" A voice close by, (the soldiers were watering their horses in the river,) answered with a coarse laugh:

"You are the courtesan of the *Bande Nere*! That is what you are." The poor girl uttered a cry, and fled.

One year after this, in the month of April, the fleet of Filippino d'Oria, set sail in the afternoon for the seacoast of Analfi, steering for Capri, and Cape Campanello. It was composed of fifteen galleys, with which the nephew of Andrea held blockaded the gulf of Naples, in order to cut off all succor from the Imperialists, besieged there by Lautrec. Their Viceroy, Ugo de Moncada, determined at all costs to secure the free passage of the seas, had decided to confront himself with Filippino, and moved forward with his galleys, (on whose decks he had mustered the flower of the Spanish nobility and gentry,) in pursuit of the enemy, who, learning his intentions, were fully prepared for his reception. The usages of maritime war, and the forms of the vessels, are all now-a-days utterly changed. The galley of the middle ages has now disappeared from the seas. In the dock of the port of Genoa, however, one of them may still be seen, afloat in a corner, without masts, leaking and shattered; but in a few years, the warring elements will have destroyed every vestige of this unique symbol of the by-gone power of the Genoese. Why do they not preserve from destruction, at least this last of those swift barks on whose deck fought boldly and victoriously for so many centuries, the mariners of Italy, and of the Levant? Oh! Genoese, can you be willing to see disappear this memento of your glory, which is also the glory of Italy, as well as our own? Since you have contributed so largely to the glory of your country, preserve the memory of that glory, maintain unimpaired its last relics! The honor of Italy demands it of you, the Italians implore you to do so, O citizens of Genoa!

The fleet of Filippino moved slowly toward the open sea, wafted by a light east wind, which blew sideways upon the broad lateen sails, unfurled to their full extent, to receive its faint and interrupted breath. The oars were suspended, and the galleys, now careening on their sides, when the wind rose, and then righting themselves again as it fell, ploughed the sea with a slow and majestic sweep, and silently prepared for the

coming encounter. No commotion, no confusion appeared in these preparations; these soldiers and these sailors knew no other than that to fight was to conquer. On the prow, where the tremendous cannon *di corsia*, placed between two pieces of less calibre, opened its huge besmoked mouth towards the enemy, the bombardiers had seated themselves, after having loaded it with a ball of some sixty pounds weight. Some were talking among themselves, and others, oppressed by the meridian heat, had closed their eyes and were quietly dozing. The arquebusiers who, in battle, were usually drawn up in a line on the platform which covered the artillery, and was called the forecastle, were armed with cuirass, cuisses and caps of steel, having in rest, or at their sides, a fusée, or light gun, and holding in their hands lighted cords, ready for use; behind them other foot soldiers with pikes, halberds, partisans and lances, to which were affixed blades of iron somewhat like scythes; some crooked, and others broad and straight. Some held, raised on their shoulders, long two-handed swords, with crooked blades; there were shields and targets which served for offence as well as defence, by means of a sharp, strong steel fixed in their centres; in short, there were all the multiplied variety of arms and amature which the robust arms and powerful chests of our fathers could support and wield whole days without detriment, under the scorching rays of the sun in Leo, and which the youth of our times, wrapt in a *robe de chambre* and stretched on a sofa, Voltaire in hand, contemplate in their halls, hung with these dusty trophies. The *corsia** of the galley, a space four yards wide, that extended from poop to prow, between the two lateral bands of rowers, was packed with soldiers, in the capacity of rear guard, ready to rush forward when the front ranks fell, or, if victorious, to leap upon the enemy's deck. The oarsmen, five at each oar, with arms, and, sometimes, the whole chest naked, bound to the benches on which they sat, by chains never to be loosed but from their corpses, were, for the greater part, Turkish slaves, though some were delinquents, condemned to the oar for their crimes; some were prisoners of war, (atrocious custom!) and on the galley of Andrea, they were mostly Spaniards. All of this nation who fell into his hands, he put to the oar, for he hated them above every other. For this miserable crew, the impending battle was but an ordinary event, a game in which their life was staked, true; but, losing it, they escaped much suffering, and retaining it, they at least shared, in a small degree, in the fruits

* English, *coursey*.

of the victory : for on these occasions, their ferocious masters were lavish to them in *better food* and wine. The courage, then, which these poor wretches manifested in view of approaching battle, was but the profound resignation of despair. Whether the cannon ball of the enemy traversed their midst, or, striking the hull of the galley, scuttled it ; or, as often happened, the galley was set on fire, they saw before them nothing but death. Thus cruelly circumstanced, without being able, chained as they were, to assist in any way, without experiencing any of those passionate emotions which make the prospect of death less dreadful, could they feel aught of the love of country, of party hate, of the pride of victory, of the glory of success ? Not even that sanguinary and bestial instinct which urges man against man in the fury of combat, in a kind of intoxicated delirium, ever stirred in them. While the soldiers, sailors, and free men on board, could move about, could act, could fight, could in some way or other procure victory or defeat ; it was theirs to row, and be silent, to suffer themselves (still rowing and still silent) to be killed or mutilated, since, for an act less servile, they might reckon upon a blow, and sometimes a dagger-thrust from the overseer.

Meantime, on the poop, which rose steep from the water's edge, with its carved sides covered with arabesques gaily painted and richly gilded, shaded by a rich silken canopy with its tasselled curtains stretched upon hoops and supported by three spears ; in this place of honor, stood the captain of the galley, and the principal officers of the expedition. On the lowest point that remained above the water, at the stern of the vessel, were three enormous lanterns, which were kept burning at night. Here floated the banner of Genoa, a red cross on a white field, and the same device was seen on the banderols and streamers, which, in great numbers, ornamented the yards and masts of the galley. Arms, oars, shrouds, rowers, sailors, soldiers, officers, all were ready ; every one was at his post, the greater part fixing their eyes on the maintop, from whence a watchman was to give the word as soon as the enemy hove in sight. The broad blue wave reflected in its depths the purple tint of the oars, the long sides of the galley, the gilding of the poop, the whiteness of the sails, the glitter of arms, the varied colors of pennons and banners, and these reflected tints became more vivid from the contrast of the whitened foam that marked the vessel's track.

Five galleys, about fifty yards distant from each other, formed the squadron ; the others had put out to sea, in order to surround *the enemy* as soon as the strife began.

Several small well-armed vessels were to hover about the enemy, to annoy and harass them by the discharge of small arms. On the fore-castle of the admiral's galley, stood Lamberto, wearing a helmet, in which waved a plume of the color of amaranth. His bust, arms and ribs were covered with a coat of mail of burnished steel striped with gold. His trowsers, loose to the knees, and then fitted tightly to the leg, were of the same color as his plume: on his arm, a shield, lined with quilted velvet: in his right hand a sword, whose blade near the handle, was nearly a span broad, strong and sharp-pointed, bearing the inscription, *Proemium virtutis*, — a weapon gained by his valor, — for, in the time which we have overleaped with so much dexterity, he had not been playing, or standing with his hands in his pockets.

Even before the nocturnal meeting with Selvaggia, which we have narrated, he felt strongly inclined to seek his fortune elsewhere. After having heard her, and knowing that with her ardent temperament, it would be no easy matter to dissuade her from her resolution to attach herself to him at whatever cost, he thought the safest and most upright part would be to leave the camp, and having immediately obtained his discharge from Orazio Baglione, he left the barracks the next morning, accompanied by his Swiss servant. Could he have been willing to join the Imperialists, he might have settled his affairs more to his own advantage. But he believed, that, to the fortunes of France, were united those of Florence. He thought that the intention of Charles V. was to subdue Italy, and that of Francis I. and the French was, to give it liberty.

Poor Lamberto! it is easily seen that he was young!

The most renowned of the Italian captains who followed the party of France at this time, was, without dispute, Andrea Doria. Lamberto, in the course of a few days, was in Genoa, and obtaining permission to follow its banner, he took his place on board one of the galleys that were just setting out in pursuit of the fleet, which Ugo di Moncada, Viceroy of Naples, was conducting from Spain to the shores of that kingdom.

In this battle, in which the viceroy was defeated and put to flight, Lamberto, under the eye of Andrea, had been the first to leap upon the admiral's galley of the enemy, and as a reward for this proof of bravery, had received the beautiful sword which he now brandished in momentary expectation of a second encounter with the same enemy.

In the short time he had remained with Sig. Giovanni, he had written once to his mother and to Niccolò; another letter he had sent from Genoa, before embarking; but the posts in those

days were not conducted as at present, and once only, and that after a long interval, had he received an answer from Niccolò. Though this complete ignorance of what most nearly concerned him, was to him a great trial, he consoled himself by thinking how much joy he should occasion, by returning unexpectedly, and worthy of Liza's hand. These hints are sufficient to prevent us from leaving a too great hiatus in the life of Lamberto. Now we will turn to the armada of Filippino.

The sun was already descending in the west, and the Genoese captain, thinking that the enemy would not have time to show themselves on that day, was about to give the signal to steer for Salerno, when, from the maintop of the galley on which Lamberto stood, was heard the prolonged cry, "Sail ho!" A low murmur, a rattling of arms, a movement, but without confusion, among crew and soldiers, followed this cry, and, at the same time, the sonorous voice of every leader issued the final orders. By a rope attached to the top of the mainmast of the admiral's galley, which was placed in the midst of the line of battle, the banner of the Oria was swiftly run up, which, unfolding itself and flying in the breeze, was greeted by a general and simultaneous shout from the whole fleet, who saluted thus the signal for battle. The echo reverberated from the shore and the mountains of Salerno.

The oars, which before were suspended and motionless, were now simultaneously plunged into the water, and the galleys, as if moved by a single will, darted off like discharged arrows, leaving the waves behind whitened and agitated. After the first sail, appeared a second, and, issuing from behind the rocks of the promontory of Campanella, came another, and another, until, in the space of half an hour, the two fleets found themselves face to face, within a cannon-shot of each other.

Filippino d'Oria, a man of middling stature, thin of flesh, but full of sinew, stood on the starboard side of the galley which bore the standard, a place which he, as captain of the armada, was to occupy during the battle. He was covered with glittering armor, showing only a face embrowned by the sun, and hardened by the wind and marine exposure, while his lineaments were the very type of the daring race of Genoese sailors. And sailor, nay, perfect seaman, might also be called the nephew of Andrea, who, in the school of such a man, had learnt not only to direct the evolutions of a fleet, but, likewise, the course of a galley, like a regular pilot. If we mention this as meritorious, it is because among many nations (the French for instance), it was often the practice, to elect as leaders in maritime war, gentlemen, initiated only in the military art on shore, who left

entirely to the pilots the care of naval matters, having in battle no other thought than that of fighting bravely at the head of their soldiers, as they would have done in storming a fortress, or an intrenchment. Beside Filippino, stood the lieutenant, and Monseigneur di Croy, sent by Lautrec with a reinforcement for the armada of three hundred arquebusiers; other officers stood in places of less honor, near the first oar on the right hand, which had seven rowers instead of five, (and it was the same on both sides with the first four oars of the gang at the poop, by whom the rowing was regulated,) and on the left hand side of the vessel, also at his post of battle, the proper captain of the galley: all with knitted brows and eyes fixed on the enemy, studying their designs and movements, with that serious, tranquil and resolute bearing, which is acquired by the bravest men only after long service.

The *nostromo* (the captain of the oarsmen) was stationed at the end of the deck, near the poop, with a powerful ox sinew under his arm, called the *nerbo*, a short, broad sword hung without sheath at his side, his arms were crossed on his breast; he wore a low rusty steel cap, a coat of mail, loose trowsers, and his feet bare. Eight *comiti* and *agguzzini** paced up and down the deck, observing with a steady, sidelong glance, that every galley-slave did his duty, for if one of them slackened his rowing, with the rapidity of lightning, the *nerbo* described the figure eight in the air, and descended hissing, upon the back of the culprit, and, at the same time, on those of his neighbors, for they cared little about precision in their retribution.

All this was done in dead silence, for the rigid discipline of a Genoese galley, allows no word spoken when the officers are at their post of battle; no sound was heard but that of the wave, struck at regular intervals, the groaning of the row-locks under the pressure of the oar, and the rattling of the chains, as each galley-slave rose and sank on his bench.

Though no one spoke, the *nostromo*, turning, from time to time, looked now in the Captain's face, now in that of Filippino, as if expecting an order, which, it seemed to him, the occasion demanded.

To understand what follows, it will be necessary to know, that, among the last preparations of a galley about to commence an action, was that of raising two partitions or intrenchments, across the deck, one at the prow behind the artillery, and the other at the main-mast, and which were called bastions. Each

* These also commanded the oarsmen, subject to the orders of the *nostromo*.

of these bastions was composed of two plank partitions, six yards high, resting on sharpened points that were driven into the coursey and the rail of the vessel. The space between the two partitions, of about a yard's length, was filled with coils of cable, and the front part, towards the prow, was stuffed with wisps of straw. This was done, to arrest, or, at least, to diminish the force of the enemy's fire, which, passing freely through the whole length of the vessel, would have committed too much havoc among the crew, or, in case they were boarded by the enemy, they could prolong the defence behind this bulwark, and, concentrating their forces, oftentimes, by an impetuous onset, recover the ground they had lost.

The *nostromo*, then, as we said, had turned several times to his superiors, till, at last, the Captain, guessing his thoughts, said to Filippino, —

"If your Grace think best, we will raise the bastion of the prow."

Doria bowed in the affirmative, and the *nostromo*, giving a prolonged oh! to warn the mariners to listen to the order, shouted, "*Oh! do' trincheto! Raise the bastion at the prow.*" At this sound there was a stir, though without anything like confusion, at the prow, and immediately the sailors brought up the partitions with their supports, and the coils of ropes which were placed in the manner above-mentioned.

In five minutes, all was in order, and the men who had conducted the operation, resumed their places, and their immovability. In the mean time, a Capuchin friar, the chaplain of the galley, had donned his stole, and, standing in the centre of the poop, with ritual in hand, recited a few prayers. Then he raised his hand, and signed, with a great cross, the crew and the soldiers, who all, from Doria to the veriest ship-boy, made also the sign of the cross, and then Filippino, raising his voice, shouted —

"Courage, boys! In the name of God, of St. John the Baptist—the day will be ours! Eight galleys against six! Look! see how they come! By St. Catino, they only take four *palate* at each stroke.* And Filippino and his officers and the *nostromo* smiled to see the uncertain and irregular rowing of the hostile galleys.

"Now," continued Doria, "I hope that every man will do

* A galley well manned with rowers, and of good proportions, ought to take six *palate* at every impulsion given by the oars, that is, the first oar ought to strike the water, just where the sixth oarsman was stationed; the sixth should strike the place of the twelfth, and so on, counting towards the prow.

his duty as usual, for the honor of Genoa, and in the service of the most Christian king. Nostromo! send round a barrel of wine!" The command was immediately executed, and the overseers carried round a keg of wine, which being passed to every bench of rowers, each one drinking in his turn, produced far better effects than the thought of honoring Genoa, or serving the king of France. "Now, Monseigneur," said Filippino to the Captain of the French arquebusiers, "see that your men hold themselves in readiness, for by the blessed in heaven, I mean to drink a cup of Alicant on the deck of that Reale di Spagna."

"*Ce ne sera pas moi qui y ferai faute*," said the Frenchman, briskly, and turning to his men, after a few words of encouragement, he raised on high his naked sword, crying, as was the custom of this nation, "Vive le roi!" and to this cry was united that of "Viva Genova" from the people of Doria, and in the distance was heard that of "Viva España," from the galleys of the enemy.

The two fleets, in the meantime, approached within half a cannon-shot, and Filippino, motioning to the steersman, who, fixing his eyes upon him, appeared to divine and instantaneously execute his very thought, continued to regulate the course of the galley, striving to bring it abreast the Reale di Spagna, not, however, so directly as to be raked by its cannons, and not so obliquely, as not to be able to sweep it with his own, in as straight a line as possible. The Spaniards also were seeking the same advantageous position, but less expert and less skilful, they moved with difficulty and indecision.

"Bombardiers, to your pieces, and attention!" then turning to the head of the oarsmen, he said, "Row all! nostromo!"

The nostromo leaped into the centre of the coursey, and with the *berbe* raised high in the air, shouted, "Arranca! arranca!"*

Row with all your might! And the same cry was repeated by the *coriti* and *agguzzini*, showering a tempest of blows to right and left, on the galley-slaves, who, redoubling their velocity and force, bent their backs, and stretched their arms, in which the swollen muscles seemed ready to gush from the skin, and the galley, impelled with new and tremendous impetus, flew over the waves like a sledge on a frozen pond.

Filippino was all eye. He saw that the moment had arrived: he leaped to the helm, and turning it himself, with force enough to bring the vessel to the wind, he found himself in the position he wished, and cried, "Fire!"

* That is, row with all your might.

And a tremendous report of the five cannons at the prow, seemed to create, as if by enchantment, a dense white cloud, which occupied for a moment the whole fore part of the vessel. Filippino, who, on account of the overhanging smoke, could not see the enemy, was bending over the rail, made a gesture of impatience because he could not at once learn the effect of his fire. But soon a gust of wind dissipated the smoke, and the Reale di Spagna was seen keeled over on its side with the weight of its mainmast, which, broken at its foot, had fallen, partly among its rowers, and partly in the water. The sailors, however, with their axes quickly cut it away, and throwing it overboard, the galley righted, and itself commenced firing, covering itself with smoke that rose in dense whirling globes, now gray, now white, now, from the opposite rays of the setting sun, becoming gilded and transparent at its edges.

"Viva Genova! and forward, for the Reale is ours!" cried Filippino, cheered by this happy beginning, and at the sight of his vessels, all admirably placed, and rapidly discharging volley after volley at the enemy, who, it must be confessed, answered with a good grace. The musketry kept up an incessant fire on both sides, and soon the clear serenity of the sky was occupied by a dense reddish haze, through which the blood-red rayless disk of the sun seemed to float, looking as if made of melted copper.

The Capitana, or admiral's galley, still led the way; straight forward, swift, an intense firing fulminating from its prow, for Doria was resolved, without delay, either to invest the Reale, to send it to the bottom with a blow from his beak-head if he could, or to take it by boarding the vessel.

The air was filled with a loud and continued thundering, which did not, however, drown the whistling of the cannonballs, which passed by hundreds along the sides and ends of the vessel, sometimes striking, cracking through the masts, yards and rails, and detaching splinters and fragments, without, however, as yet doing serious damage. At last, the huge ball of a *corsiero** opened a road with a crash, through the partitions of the bastion of the prow, and, passing across the galley, carried away the limbs of the unfortunate rowers in its way.

The neighbors of these miserable wretches, covered with the blood and the palpitating entrails of their companions, who, shockingly mutilated, fell dead or slid hardly alive, groaning under their benches, seemed to cease rowing just when it was most important that they should put forth all their strength,

* Cannon placed on the coursey.

and some of them sent forth a lamentable and despairing shriek.

"Nostromo!" cried Filippino, with an oath, furiously raising his sword, and the *nostromo*, also exasperated, rushed with his *agguzzini* upon these unhappy victims, and no longer with the *nerbo*, but with his unsheathed sword, now with the flat and now with the edge, struck furiously on their bare backs, crying,

"Row, rascals! I'll teach you to be afraid! On! on! The bang* in your mouths! all! and then howl, if you can!" And enforcing his words by the above-mentioned use of his sword, every man, with his cork in his mouth, resumed his rowing with new vigor.

Filippino was still at the wheel, enraged at not being able from the dense smoke, and the growing obscuration of the sky, the sun having already set, to discern clearly the Reale di Spagna, and the precise point where he designed to strike it with the beak of his galley.

But fortune, who was disposed to favor him, showed him at this moment, in a space of sky from which the smoke was momentarily swept by a gust of wind, the mainmast of the Reale, around which whirled in massy folds, the red and yellow pennon of Spain. That was sufficient for him to calculate where the hostile castle ought to be, he turned the helm violently, and shouted, "Attention! Prepare to invest!" And this warning was highly necessary, to enable each one to plant himself firmly on his feet, and be ready to leap on the enemy's deck, profiting by the first confusion of the moment.

A moment passed of terrible expectation, of rapid and tremendous muscular efforts of the rowers, of accelerated speed of the galley, of indescribable anxiety on the part of the combatants, and then came the fearful collision, with a crash, and a cracking of all the ribs of the galley, which arrested its career at once, as if it had struck upon a rock, its beak-head being driven obliquely into the forecastle of the enemy. The waters gushed up from beneath, and rose, hurled into the air in high, foaming jets, between the two galleys: many of the men, notwithstanding the warning, staggering from the shock, fell headlong into the sea: the yards, shrouds and oars of the two galleys striking together became entangled, breaking with the shock and flying in pieces: from the maintops, filled with archers

* In the moment of peril, the galley-slaves were made to take between their teeth a piece of cork, which they were tied with a cord to their necks, to prevent them by their cries from awakening fear in the soldiers or mariners.

siers, the bullets rattled down like hail, and on both sides all who could take part in the combat, rushed towards the place, where, from the juxtaposition of the two vessels, it was possible, if not easy, to pass from one to the other; and here raged a most furious and desperate battle, with swords, daggers, knives and heavy broad-axes, a most sanguinary and obstinate struggle, a clutching, a thrusting a falling, a rising again, a rushing upon, and a continued and thickening conflict, rendered more and more fearful and murderous, by the increasing darkness of the night, the narrowness and strangeness of the places on which the combatants were obliged to stand, and the unexpected agitation of the waves, which, having been gradually raised by a strong east wind, that was now subsiding, became high and threatening, and mounting up in air, fell impetuously on the sides and decks of the fluctuating and shattered galleys.

This infernal scene was lighted, in part, by the incessant flash of the cannons and muskets, and the red glare of the lanterns, placed at the stern of each vessel, which were lighted at night; but to this poor and uncertain illumination was now added a more effectual and splendid one, proceeding from a Spanish galley, which had taken fire, and which soon became a single, wide-spreading blaze, playing a thousand antics, as now high, now low, it was reflected from the alternate rise and fall of the waves.

This vessel was about fifty yards distant from the two combatants; from it issued a most vivid glow, accompanied by an intense heat, and on the air came the shrill, despairing shrieks of the galley-slaves, who, chained to their benches, were consuming in the flames, without the power to free themselves, and perishing one after another by a slow and most cruel death, while the mariners and soldiers who saved themselves by swimming or in boats, left them to their fate, without a care or a thought for their relief.

But neither this tremendous spectacle, nor the danger from the probable and impending explosion of the powder on board the burning ship, diminished in the least the fury of the contest on board the Reale and the Capitana, from whose tops rose, from time to time, clouds of sparks, and of the dense and fœtid smoke proceeding from the pitchy wood, which was rapidly consuming.

Filippino had no sooner run into the hostile galley, than, leaving the helm to the pilot, he threw himself with Monseigneur de Croy and his officers, into the hottest of the fight, where they all distinguished themselves by their reckless daring.

Lamberto, who was on the forecastle with his servant Mau-

rice at his side, and surrounded by French arquebusiers, had observed among them, one who stood near him, who, instead of the steel cap of his comrades, wore a morion, that entirely concealed his face. He had not time, however, to observe this person particularly, for the galleys coming into collision, the conflict ensued, which we have already described, and in which Lamberto was one of the foremost. And as there were no small number of soldiers present, who had fought under the standard of Sig. Giovanni, Lamberto rushed upon the enemy, shouting, "Viva Sig. Giovanni and the Bande Nere." Thus he incited his companions to show themselves worthy of their former fame, and when he achieved a bold stroke, they in their turn shouted "Huzza for Sforzino!" thus, they mutually encouraged each other to bear themselves bravely.

After a long conflict and infinite slaughter, they succeeded in subduing the enemy: and, repulsing them from their own deck, they sprang in crowds upon that of their adversaries, and here increased, if possible, the fury and the thirst for blood, in disputing hand to hand the upper deck of the galley, which, slippery with blood, and rocked by the agitation of the sea, seemed at every moment to slide from under the feet of the combatants, who, now pushed and jammed against each other, now separated, were propelled headlong over the rails, where, many, from the weight of their arms, and from the re-percussion of the waves, sank immediately to the bottom: others died from wounds on the head, inflicted by the men in the boats, who were in attendance to give a finishing stroke to an enemy, or rescue a friend from the water, and some few succeeded in saving themselves by clinging to the prow or oar of some boat; for the water was riled with boats leaping from wave to wave, swimmers, corpses, half-drowned figures, fragments of plank and broken oars, while the flames of the burning galley diffused around a vivid, fiery glow.

Don Ugo di Moncada, Viceroy of Naples, after having done what he could to defend his ship, and knowing that he was utterly defeated, yet scorned to surrender, and resolved to die, but to make his death cost his enemy dear. Surrounded by his officers, and the captains of his troops, among whom were Cesare Fieramosca, brother of Ettore, Don Pietro Urias, Azimio Colonna, M. del Guasto, and many others, he prepared to make a final resistance behind the mainmast, near the helm. Covered with glittering armor, a shield on his arm, and the order of the Golden Fleece on his breast, he awaited the last assault of Filippino's men, who, panting and furious, now pressed upon him through the coursey.

Lamberto rushed forward, intending to be the first to strike a blow, but, without his knowing exactly how, the soldier of the morion, whom he had always found at his side, and to whom he had lent his aid during the battle, passed before him, and assailed at once by many blows, fell, pushed headlong into the sea. It seemed to Lamberto that, as he fell, he called upon *his* name, but, surrounded as he was, with so many enemies, and his ears deafened by the din around him, he was by no means certain that he heard aright, or that he might not have been deceived by his fancy. Meantime, (not to be too tedious,) after a brief but sharp contest, this knot of Spaniards was broken up and completely routed. The viceroy being slain, as also Fieramosca, and almost all those who had attempted to prolong the defence in this desperate manner, the Reale di Spagna came into the possession of the Genoese, who, striking the Castilian flag, raised in its stead the red cross of Genoa, amid the joyful shouts of the victors.

In the attainment of this victory, not a little credit was due to the galleys, which, sent out to sea by Doria, before the commencement of the battle, had returned upon the rear of the Spaniards, riddling their ships with their cannon-balls. One ball among others, had at the last fire, struck the Reale, and sunk it a hand's breadth under water, just as the Genoese had obtained possession of it, and Lamberto had hardly time to receive the sword of a Spanish gentleman, whom he had taken prisoner, when it was perceived that the galley was sinking. Filippino ordered his men to leave the vessel, and it may be readily believed that the order was obeyed without delay. Some threw themselves into the boats, others succeeded in scrambling up the sides of the Capitana, and in a few moments the ship was emptied of free men, but the galley slaves remained; there was no human aid for them. They were already immersed in water to their girdles, and from the depths of the galley, from its deep hollow keel, the air forced out by the water which was filling the ship, uttered a low sound, which a poet would have called the lament of the ship at finding itself about to be swallowed by the waves.

But far other lamentations, (and in these there was no poetry,) far other cries came from the wretched oarsmen, some striving with tremendous but futile efforts to loosen their chains, others, writhing, throwing their bodies here and there, some, weeping and crying for mercy, but the most of them uttering curses and maledictions; and the water still gaining upon them.

In a few moments, a huge wave swept along, and then, *where before appeared the rails, stern and beak of the Reale,*

was seen only white and gurgling foam. The masts inclined forward, and they also sank and were closed over by the wave; and at the same moment, a horrid and instantaneous explosion, accompanied by a vivid flash, shook with a deafening roar, the sea, the mountains and the armada, and then all was utter darkness. Then, after a few moments, came a perfect hail-storm of beams, wood, iron stanchions, human limbs, and a thousand broken fragments, crippling and killing in their descent, an immense number of people, and then a silence, astounding and fearful, in which nought was heard but the whistling of the breeze through the shrouds, and the dash of the wave against the vessel's sides, or the distant roar of the surf against the rocky cliffs of the shore.

Lamberto, after this action, was sent to the army of Lautrec. This, being defeated and dispersed, he went into Puglia, with Renzo da Ceri, then, when siege was laid to Florence, he decided to hasten there immediately, to aid in its defence, and succeeded, not without difficulty, in making his way into the city, where, arriving with palpitating heart, near the house of the Lapi, he met Laudomia, in the manner already related.



CHAPTER XV.

THEIR search was not of long duration, for Laudomia soon became aware that it was folly to hope anything from it, and she immediately reconducted Lamberto to the hall-door of her father's house. He walked on a long while, silent, fluctuating between a thousand thoughts and suspicions, but at last he could restrain his feelings no longer, and he said, grasping Laudomia's arm.

"But am I not to know what all this mystery means?"

"Oh! Lamberto! I implore you, let us first find my father," said Laudomia, dragging him along with her, and with rapid steps, they reached and entered the house.

The young girl knocked at Niccolò's door, calling her father, and in the time that he delayed to come and open the door, she took Lamberto's hand, and with the deepest emotion, almost weeping, she said in his ear, "Oh! do not say a word to afflict him, poor papa!"

Then, hearing the heavy tread of the old man approaching the door, she gently pushed Lamberto aside, that her father might not see him without proper preparation, and at this moment, the door was opened. Niccolò, still powerfully agitated by the appearance of Liza, whom, notwithstanding his stern nature, he loved with all a father's tenderness, walked with unsteady step, and his countenance betrayed the internal struggle. Thinking that Laudomia had returned to spend the remainder of the evening with him, as it was yet early, he turned back into the room, without speaking, and reseating himself in his chair at the fire, resumed the reading of his prayer book; but Laudomia, approaching him, and looking at him with as cheerful a countenance as she could command, said:

"I have good news for you, papa, — do you know who has come, and stands waiting at the door?"

"Lamberto?" answered the old man, looking up quickly, and attempting to rise, "Oh! come, come my son," he cried,

and Lamberto, who was listening eagerly to what passed, was instantly on his knees before him.

Niccolò, taking his head in both hands, pressed it to his breast. Landomia stood near, and with hands clasped, and eyes raised to heaven, prayed that God would aid all three in this terrible moment. They remained thus, for a time, without speaking; then, releasing Lamberto from his close embrace, Niccolò placed one hand on his forehead, and looked fixedly in his face. At last with a sigh, he said resolutely, "You have no longer the face of a boy — this is the face of a strong, daring man. This brown tinge, this scar that crosses your cheek, becomes you well. *You* have kept your promise, Lamberto, but *we*" — and here the poor old man, raising his shrivelled hands to heaven, struck his forehead, and covered his eyes, remaining thus, until he was quite sure that he should not give way to tears.

"And *we*," he continued, "who thought to see you again, to receive you with rejoicings, with open arms, to say, now you are ours indeed — I, who thought to welcome you with open and unclouded brow, am here before you — and it is the first time in ninety years, Lamberto — am here like a culprit to confess my shame with my own lips. I feel impelled to fall on my knees before you, but I know you would not suffer it. I listen to me, Lamberto, and be a man, such as your face shows you to be."

The poor youth, completely bewildered, with one knee still bent, gazed on the old man with eyes filled with astonishment, or, we might say, terror, for such words from the mouth of Niccolò were truly terrible, and presaged something more fearful to come.

"Messer Niccolò, you will kill me with these mysterious words, speak, in the name of God, and fear not for me."

"Well, know then, that I am dishonored, Liza has betrayed me, has betrayed you, her family, her country."

Lamberto was on his feet in an instant, and, without knowing what he did, his hand was on his sword hilt. "By the eternal God, that cannot be, you must be deceived; and whoever has told you these stories, lies in his throat!"

"Lamberto," said Niccolò, taking him by the arm, and making him sit down by his side, "I who speak to you, am your father, you know it; now then, be silent, and hear me! Yes, Liza has betrayed us all, — from the blood of the Lapi, from the blood of Niccolò, has sprung a woman, capable of giving herself to the arms of a traitor, the enemy of this people, of this city! — *such has been the judgment of God on this*

house — *Justus es Domine, et rectum judicium tuum!*” And here the old man was obliged to cease speaking, to recover his breath.

He arose, went to a chest, opened it, took out a paper, and, returning to Lamberto, placed it in his hand. “We were here one evening before going to bed, some one knocked at the door, Ferruccio entered and gave me this letter on the part of the Gonfaloniere, read it.”

Lamberto read. His face which, from excitement, had become flushed and almost purple, as he went on, turned pale as ashes. “And all this was true?” he said at last.

“It was true.” And here Niccolò narrated, how, going up to his daughters’ room, he had found Liza with her infant, and then the sequel, with which the reader is acquainted, as far as the occurrences of this very evening. Lamberto listened to the end, without betraying the least sign of what he felt, excepting, that the border of his coat of mail hanging as he sat, against his iron leg-pieces, occasionally made a rattling noise, occasioned by a convulsive trembling in all his limbs.

When Niccolò had done speaking, all three remained mute for several minutes.

When Lamberto entered the house with Laudomia, he had taken from his servant a package, together with the sword he had received from Andrea Doria, and had deposited them on a table by the side of Niccolò.

He now rose, and opening the package, drew out a chain of gold, some papers which were testimonials, all in his praise, from Filippino and Andrea Doria, and a bill of exchange for the ransom of the Count d’Aguilar, whom he had taken prisoner in the battle of Salerno; he held the sword and the papers in his hand for a moment, then, flinging them all on the floor, he said, shaking his head with a sinister smile, that froze Laudomia with terror, — “They have cost me torrents of blood; by my faith, but it has been well spent!” Then, unfolding a small parcel, he took from it a rose-stem with its withered leaves, threw them into the flames, which devoured them in a moment, and said in a voice trembling with emotion, “Oh, how could I think of returning to Florence?”

At these words, Niccolò rose, and placing his hand upon his shoulder, with a gentle, but at the same time, serious tone, he said:

“Lamberto, are you not a Florentine? Is not this your country, now menaced by so many misfortunes? And can you *repent* of having come here to aid her! God knows, that if I *could*, with my life, liberate you from your just grief, I would

gladly do it — Oh ! if God had only thus willed my death and not my shame ! — But who can cope with Him, who can resist His will ? The evil has no remedy, and this evil is mine, is yours, is that of this poor house, of a few individuals, and ought we to think of that, ought we to care for that, when an immense evil, a universal and imminent ruin, impends upon our country ? Oh ! Lamberto, here, the old men, the women, the children have taken up arms in defence, and you——”

“ Say no more, Messer Niccolò : you break my heart ” — It was but for a moment, for, indeed, the heart is not of bronze. “ Yes, Messer Niccolò, yes, my father, for, in spite of fortune, I can call you no otherwise, this arm, this blood, belongs to Florence, my life, my strength, I consecrate wholly to my country, to the defence of this people, and of our liberty. Was it the will of God to take so much good, so much blessedness from my life ? Blessed be his Holy name, that the greatest privilege he has not taken from me, that of fighting and dying for the land of my birth, in defence of these walls that enclose my dear ones, my friends, my brethren ! You will see me from the walls, combat, and fall weltering in my blood ; you will say, ‘ Lamberto died like an honest man, like a brave citizen,’ and he will remain forever in your heart, in your memory. Oh, my father ! I spoke like a madman ; but to lose in a moment, that, which for years has been the star of my hopes, the summit of all earthly good ; purchased so dearly, too ! I am distracted ; pardon me. Oh, how many there are who would esteem themselves happy — now I know it — how many would bless God, if they could be permitted to give their life for their country ! and yet are forced to see that life consumed uselessly, and at last lose it uselessly, and in obscurity ! And I, on the contrary ? — God, I thank Thee ! I thank Thee, O Christ, our King, that Thou hast gathered me under Thy banner ! Let nothing more be said, my father ; let nothing more be spoken of, but to combat, to conquer or die for the country — for its liberty ! ”

And in uttering these words, Lamberto's face lighted up, and his eyes flashed. Niccolò embraced him with a gush of affection and joy, and poor Landomia, who had listened in mute attention to his passionate outpouring, pressed unconsciously to her white, delicate hands, the robust right hand of Lamberto. Recovering herself in a moment, she dropped his hand, and, blushing, left the room, saying she would give directions for the accommodation of Lamberto's horses and servant. The other two remaining seated at the fire, Niccolò continued,

“ You have well said, Lamberto, it is time now to think, not

of our own affairs, but of the affairs of the country. But be of good courage; all that has happened was predicted by our sainted master. The more grievous the scourge becomes, the nearer approaches the crown and the triumph; the more inevitable will appear the ruin, and the nearer will be our succor. When it shall seem as if all men had abandoned or betrayed us, then shall arise the power of the Lord, then shall His angels descend upon these walls to defend them. So preached Fra Girolamo. Who shall say that he ever lied? Come, then, all the arms of Pope and Emperor, come all the armies of the earth, can they stand against the sword of a single seraph? — against that sword which precipitated Lucifer into the abyss?"

Lamberto, who was steadfastly gazing into the fire, answered mechanically, "You say the truth," but of the whole discourse of the old man, he had not heard a syllable. The thoughts which agitated his mind were of such intensity, that he was in no state to attend to anything else. He was saying to himself, "Thou hast abandoned thy mother, old, infirm, with one foot already in the grave, all for *her*, to gain *her* love, to merit *her* hand. Thou hast returned; where is thy mother? Dead. Where is Liza? Worse than dead — she has fled with a traitor! Oh! God is just!"

Fortunately for the young man, he had parted kindly with his mother, and she had blessed him; had it been otherwise, his grief would have been insupportable.

Meantime, Niccolò, to divert him as much as possible from the thoughts of his misfortunes, and to excite his interest in that of the defence, continued,

"But, although God has promised us His aid at last, not for this are we to neglect to assist ourselves so far as in us lies. Everything has been attended to, Lamberto; and things are arranged in such a way that this hostile army can effect but very little. 'Tis but just now, that those who boasted that they could swallow up Florence at one gulp, have not been able to beat down even the campanile of S. Miniato."

"Tell me, Messer Niccolò," interrupted Lamberto, but the words died on his lips. He wished to ask of his mother, to talk of her last moments, to know if she had pronounced his name; if, before she had breathed her last, she had asked to see him, if she had blessed him, if she had appeared displeased with him, if she had pardoned him for leaving her, and a hundred other things. But at the moment of pronouncing the words, his courage failed him. There are some wounds of the heart so deep, so poignant, so keenly sensitive, that there is no

way of treating them. It is with the greatest difficulty that one can make them known, can speak of them; it seems as though these emotions themselves, already so painful when they weigh upon the mind in silence, would, when expressed in words, become too tremendous and overpowering, and one feels that if they should be increased in the least degree, they would be beyond human endurance.

Lamberto remained, therefore, perplexed for a moment, and then repeating the phrase, but changing the subject of it, he said:

"Tell me, Messer Niccolò, do you know where your daughter has taken refuge?"

"You mean Liza, for my daughter is Laudomia," answered the old man, with an expression of severity. "I know not, and I care not to know. Remember, Lamberto, that before I decide upon a measure I think of it; after my mind is once made up, I never change."

"Now we will talk of Florence. Let us consider your own affairs. You are a mounted cavalier, you are equipped as a man-at-arms. If you take my advice, you will place yourself in the company of Arsoli. He is a brave man, his men are honest fellows, and we have great need of horse to keep open the passes, and to scour the country towards Mugello, where the troops of the Marchese del Vasto are already in motion."

"I will do so. But this man — this Troilo — where is he?"

"He is in camp. But what thoughts are turning your brain? What would you have? Do you not know he is her husband? If you should meet him in battle, thrust your sword through his breast — it is lawful — but do not expect it, that will never happen: traitors are not to be met in battle. Courage, Lamberto! away with these thoughts. Be a man, Lamberto!" The young man struck his dagger against the armor that covered his legs, and bounded upon his feet.

"You are in the right. Let us go then to Arsoli, and make the necessary preliminaries. But I must ask you about my brothers. What has become of Baccio?"

"Dead in battle."

"Bernardo?"

"Dead in battle."

"And Bindo, and Vieri, and Averardo?"

"Defending the walls, and ready to follow their brothers, if God so ordains."

"Ah, yes! let us follow them, and God grant that I may be called speedily: for to escape from this life, is to be released from great suffering."



And so saying, he was about to go away. But the old man stopped him. He opened a chest, and, taking out a bunch of keys, "These," said he, "are the keys of the house where poor Nunziata lived, but before going hither, speak with Fivizzano, of S. Marco. He has something of importance to say to you."

"Oh, my blessed mother!" said Lamberto, taking the keys and kissing them, and the tears trickled down his cheeks.

"Your mother is in a better place than we are. And she died, blessing God that you were a brave and honest man."

"Do you tell me the truth?" asked Lamberto, much agitated, and the expression of his face wholly changed by the immense consolation, which these words conveyed to his mind.

"Yes, I tell you the truth, and Fivizzano, who received her last confession, will confirm my words."

"Oh, God be praised! God be thanked a thousand times, and this holy and pure spirit that is now beatified in His glory!"

And, in saying these words, the young man embraced his father, and shed tears of joy, which seemed to give him new life. In a few moments, he released himself from this embrace, and went out without turning back, while Niccolò said to him:

"Remember, this is your home, and when you are not under command, a bed is always ready for you here. Now go, and let me soon see you again."

Lamberto took his way towards S. Marco, and although just before, the thought of inquiring about his mother, had filled him with terror, now, on the contrary, his whole state of feeling was so changed by the words of Niccolò, that he longed to find the man who could talk to him of her; who could satisfy him on a thousand points he burned to know. He could carry his thoughts into the future, and see himself alone, without Liza, with the ever-present remembrance of having been so cruelly betrayed, and this was a tremendous misfortune, but not of a nature to sink the soul in despondency, but one that often serves to elevate the strong and virtuous spirit. But to live days, months and years, to grow old, and always with this reproach in his heart,—"Thy dying mother sought thee in vain at her bedside, the thought of thy ingratitude swelled up in her heart, another closed her eyes, and composed her stiffening limbs,"—this was a punishment he could not confront. And, indeed, what human temperament is strong enough to endure the pangs of remorse like this?

Eager to escape from such tormenting thoughts, and with an impatient hope that the words of the monk might be of a nature to dissipate them entirely, he was soon at the door of the

convent. At this late hour, it was difficult to obtain admission ; but sending in his name, he was admitted, and in a few moments found himself in the cell of Fra Zaccaria da Fivizzano.

"It is I, it is Lamberto," he said to the monk, who was astounded to see a man in full armor enter with such hot haste into his cell. "I alighted at the house of the Lapi an hour ago. I know the whole — Niccolò, poor old man, has told me the whole story about Liza — it is God's will. But I know you have something to tell me — it was you who closed the eyes of my poor mother. Pardon me that I have come to disturb you at so late an hour, but I could not wait till morning. Oh ! console me, for I have much need of it ! Tell me that she blessed me ; that she did not call me unthankful ; that she pardoned me for leaving her ! Oh ! speak, for the love of God !"

"Lamberto," said the frate, embracing him, "you are a good young man, and these fears of yours prove it. Now be quiet. Nunziata was a true mother, but she was a noble-spirited one. She loved you for your own sake, not for herself. Yes, she blessed you, and far from attaching any blame to you, she told me that she died happy, seeing you in the way to become a brave and good man. 'If God,' she said, 'deny me the comfort of having him here at my bedside, it is, perhaps, best for us both. This last parting will be less bitter, and God will thus set free my thoughts from all things here below, that I may turn them all to Him, and to the affairs of my soul.'

"Two hours before her death, (it was in the evening twilight,) she called me and said, 'Fra Zaccaria, draw that small table here and sit by my pillow, and write a few words that I have in my mind to leave for Lamberto. I know him, he will stand in need of comfort.' I wrote and sealed the letter. 'I feel,' said she, 'that my breath is failing. A little longer, and I shall not be able to speak, but may my last breath be for my Lamberto,' and extending her tremulous hand, as if you were kneeling by her, and her hand on your head, she said, 'I pray Thee, God omnipotent, to bless my son as I bless him, make him virtuous in this life, and blessed in the other.' She could say no more. She never spoke again, but passed away tranquil and serene."

Lamberto, from the beginning of this discourse, wept like a child. Fra Zaccaria handed him the letter, which the young man kissed a hundred times, and in a moment it was moist with his tears.

"Weep, for you have reason," said the monk, much moved, "weep, Lamberto, for there is no love more precious than that

of a mother, and when death has extinguished that, nothing can replace it. But why do I say *extinguished*? It is made more pure, more ardent, in that immense love, which sees all, which numbers all our tears, to turn them afterwards into as much joy. She loves you above, in paradise, as much as she loved you on earth, and more, if possible. She has compassion on this your grief; she is grateful for your tears."

"Ah! what a wretch was I," exclaimed Lamberto, his sobs coming thick and fast, "I ought to have foreseen it,—she, poor woman, suffered me to go, because—she thought only of me—to see me happy—but I ought to have foreseen this—to leave her so alone—for alas! melancholy forebodings, and the fear of the risks in which I was involved—I ought to have known that she could not endure this continued anxiety—that such grief would kill her."

"Listen to me, Lamberto. It sometimes happens, that in deciding upon a course of action, one falls into error. If it was evident to you that you had erred, I would be the last one to withdraw you from just grief on account of your fault, or from asking pardon of Him, who knows the heart better than we. But from what I know of you, and of your mother, by that authority which the church delegates unto its ministers, I charge you to trouble yourself no longer with these fears. I can assure you of your mother's feelings towards you, and this letter will furnish you with better proof than my words. Now then I give you peace."

Lamberto, impatient to read the last words of his mother, approached the light, and was unfolding the letter, but Fra Zaccaria said to him:

"Not now, my son, for it is not permitted to entertain guests in the convent at this hour of the night, and, besides, it will perhaps be better that you read this letter alone and in quiet. Since, then, you have given sufficient vent to your feelings, silence now every thought of your private woes in view of the welfare of your country. She has need of men who are strong and efficient, and not desponding and tearful. Your strength, your life, not yours, but the property of this city, will not be uselessly thrown away, while there is time to use them for your country's benefit. Lamberto, sword in hand, in front of the enemy, there God calls you,—there your mother from heaven points you your place. Fight and die for the liberty of this people, and thus will you render more honor to the name of your mother, than with a sea of tears. Oh! my son, God, in His wrath, has remembered the *sins* of our fathers. The cry of our iniquity has ascended

even to His throne. We must be washed, washed with blood. Now go, for at this hour no one from without, ought to be found in the convent, and you have already tarried here too long."

The words of the frate, so similar to those he had just heard from Niccolò, and which seemed almost to convey a reproach, roused the young man's spirit. A flush passed across his face. He pressed Fra Zaccaria's hand, and, looking him in the face, an expression of indignation flashed from his brow, but immediately recovering himself, he said :

"With regard to my poor mother, I had need of your consolation. — God reward you, for your words have restored me to life : but as to my country, I am a Florentine, and I may say of the house of Lapi ! Adieu ! Fra Zaccaria, the rest he may tell you, who, after a few days, shall have witnessed my deeds." So saying, he went out.

When he was again in the Piazza di S. Marco, he stopped, and, raising his hands to heaven, cried, "God, I thank Thee !" Then he seemed to breathe more freely, the blood sped with new life through his veins, and strength returned to his limbs. But the paper which he held in his hand, he wished to read, and that alone, and without interruption. The night was intensely dark, at this time there were no street lamps in Florence, and even now, where there are any, they are extinguished in the latter part of the night, but still that is some improvement, and he looked around for the distant gleam of some lamp burning before an image of the Virgin. He saw a light proceeding from the Madonna, at the corner of the Via Larga, and which was still there at the time of which we write.

Although comforted, in a great measure, by the words of Favizzano, still, a stern internal voice, ceased not to accuse him, saying, "Men absolve thee, but God sees, that in thy heart still rises the feeling, that thou hast done wrong in leaving thy mother. Thou couldst not but foresee the probability of what has but too surely come to pass. And yet thou didst leave her !"

He felt the need of some expiation, and his intense grief for the treachery of Liza, was changed, so to say, into a state of meekness and humiliation. I have deserved this chastisement, thought he, and prayed to God in these words : "If, by reason of human frailty, my poor mother be detained among those spirits who are not yet admitted to the divine presence, accept my sufferings in her behalf, make me alone to suffer in this life, and render her happy in the other."

Then, turning his thoughts again to the letter, he longed to

find there some injunction that should be arduous and painful, and whatever it might be, he was disposed to execute it scrupulously and with joy, with that impetuosity peculiar to a soul incapable of compromising with its duty or its conscience, incapable of satisfying itself with palliatives, and impelled by its own nature, to seek in every action, that which demands the greatest virtue."

The nobler, better part of his nature experienced these emotions and formed these resolutions; but, in the weaker part, where the passions, though subdued, ever seek shelter, was still shut up, as in a fortress, the image of his lost love, ready to issue forth as soon as the field was clear.

He had now reached the niche, where burned a lamp before an image of the Madonna. He opened the letter, pressed it to his lips, and began to read. It ran thus:

"For several months I have had no tidings of you. But God wills not, that any harm should come to you. You will return, and you will no longer find your mother, for it is His will, that I await you in Paradise, and this I hope from His mercy. Now my life is nearly spent, therefore my words must be few. Ever keep in mind, my son, that your first duty is towards our Lord God and His holy faith, then, towards your country. In the love of country, is included every virtue, for virtuous citizens, and no others, make the state happy and powerful. (These ideas which, perhaps, may appear to the reader beyond the capacity of a peasant, she had imbibed in the family of Niccolò.) "Preserve the memory of your father and mother, who have endeavored to bring you up respectably, according to the best of their faculties, and, not being able to leave you much property, both leave you, God be thanked, a good name, so that you may never be ashamed of them; and as to what pertains to you, so act that in your conduct, their memory may be ever blessed. If it be God's will that you rise to higher fortune, never indulge in pride, but remember that you were born of poor parents. Love and succor then the poor, and regard the rich according to their deserts, and no more. With regard to Liza, I have always had but one opinion, and that has been confirmed by facts. From the beginning, you know, this love of yours never pleased me. However, I was not willing to afflict you unnecessarily. Now, God has loosed you from it. I knew what suffering it will cause you, but I have firm faith that all that has happened, will be for your greatest good. I told you then, that Landolina was the one for you. Now, not as command, but as counsel, I recommend to you to place your affections upon her. I pray God that He make her your wife. I know no greater good to desire for you. Adieu! my good son. Many things I would gladly say to you, but my breath fails me. May you be blessed, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. YOUR MOTHER."

And this signature, she had with great difficulty, at her own desire, written with her own hand.

Who can express in words, the fulness of emotion, that inundated the heart of the poor young man at this moment?

Reader, if thou hadst a mother, who for a whole life, had no other thought than thy well-being, — no heart for anything but to study thy pleasure, — if this mother was thy guide, thy comfort, thy providence: and if thou hast lost this mother, it is not necessary that I explain to thee, the feelings of Lamberto, while reading this letter. If, on the contrary, God has not taken her from thee, no explanation can avail, — long may the supremest of all griefs, remain a mystery to thee!

Midnight sounded from the tower of the Palagio, and still Lamberto remained, rooted to the spot, kneeling upon the ground, his head resting against the wall. At length, after long and profuse weeping, his mind dwelt on the expressions of tenderness and affection with which the letter was filled. He felt the tempest that had agitated him, gradually subside, and a feeling of peace and tranquillity, mixed, it is true, but resigned and confident, took possession of his breast. But a few moments before, he was incapable of reflecting or deciding upon anything: now, on the contrary, as if at the clearing up of a dark mist, the powers of his soul began to discern the light of truth, and his thoughts to combine themselves for action. Of so many impetuous feelings and determinations, one alone remained vivid and potent, that of following in every respect, the wishes, the counsels of his mother. He would devote himself to virtue, to his country, to Laudomia.

But could he hope so soon to offer her a heart that should be true and worthy of her acceptance? He sighed, agitated by this doubt, convinced that at this point of his life, less than ever, would it be possible for him to know himself, his feelings, his desires. He saw before him a life of anxiety and trouble, but he soon abandoned the consideration and enumeration of these things, and resolved to encounter them, whatever they might be, and he at last found repose in the consoling thought of a holy duty, religiously fulfilled. He prepared himself to suffer, with that alacrity and joy which religion alone can give, because *it* alone has power enough over the heart of man, to convince him, that it is good to suffer. Religion alone, instead of teaching him to fly from pain, or to endure it with proud and impatient stolidity, teaches him to support it with serenity, and to find in its result an eternal gain: she alone, is the guide and companion of man in the days of adversity, and alone can prevent him from becoming useless or dangerous to his country.

This religious sentiment, which drew Lamberto from the *depths of despair*, and rendered him, as we shall soon see, a

brave and efficient citizen, ruled his spirit; for the men of that age, obscured as the mind of too many of them might be, by blood and crime, were, as yet, ignorant of the principle of denying faith in everything but gold, and the delights that gold can buy. They had, it is true, their loves and their hates, and these were excessive and fierce, but exactly for this reason, that they believed them things that merited either the one or the other. The poisonous breath of indifference, of doubt, admitted as a principle, had never chilled hearts, which beat free and securely, for that faith which they had chosen; which could sacrifice everything to follow it and ensure its triumph, and could say with lofty brow, "We believe there are things in the world higher, more worthy, more estimable than riches, luxuries and pleasures," without the suspicion that their words would be met with irony, or that their noble sacrifice could be received with a smile of mockery and compassion. It was fortunate for Lamberto, that he was not born three hundred years later, and consequently, had not the temptation to imitate certain heroes, whom modern literature seems to offer us as models of intrepidity, of magnanimous thought, and daring deeds. Smitten by adversity, betrayed in his dearest affections — under such influence, he would have deemed life a journey without a goal, virtue an illusion, its practice, a toil without reward; he would have seen in humanity, a herd of knaves and villains, in death, the end of suffering, and after death, annihilation. Perhaps he would have killed himself, perhaps he would have rushed like a wild beast upon his fellow-men, would have become wicked himself, to avenge himself upon them; would have exulted in the savage delight of treading them under foot, and, in fine, would have said to himself, "I alone am generous. I alone am potent against misfortune. I am greater than all others!" But he had none of these thoughts, for that century was still far distant, in which poesy and letters call *him* strong and magnanimous, who is conquered by his passions, and weak and cowardly, him who is their victor.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN Liza saw the door of her father's house closed in her face, when she saw, that her misery, her prayers, her tears, were all in vain, she moved forward, slowly and disconsolate, after resting a few moments on the door-step, to return to the house where she had left her child. With her left hand, she grasped her way along the walls, holding in her right, the small parcel of bread, in which, one might say, were numbered the days of life, that remained to her and her child, and with subdued voice, she said, as she went along, "Oh! how enormous must be my crime!" Arrived at the door of her humble dwelling in the Via Larga, she heard the moan of the poor little Ariguccio, mingled with the singing of the old woman, who, knowing no other means, was using this to quiet him. Liza hurried up stairs, and found in Niccolosa's lap, the poor little famished one, who, with its tiny hands, was fumbling in her clothes, opening its parched lips, and seeking the mother's breast. She threw upon the table, the napkin filled with bread, took the child in her arms, sat down, and found the means to quiet the child for a moment. "Oh! if my blood could take the place of milk," said, with a sigh, the miserable mother. The old woman raised a corner of the napkin, and seeing the bread she had brought, exclaimed, "This is indeed something, God be thanked! but how long will it last? Oh! who has given it to you? Where have you been? You went out in such haste —"

"To my father's."

"And is that all? Is there no other hope?"

"Nothing, nothing. I have not a soul in the world who cares for me, who will assist me. Oh! but *he* is living, the father of this innocent, and if I must pass through the flames, I would do it to reach him; I would carry his child to him, — is he not his blood? — if Fanfulla would conduct me to him — if not, I will go alone — what care I, what happens to me? at last — what if they kill me? Here, are we not dying by inches of starvation?"



“What you say is true, and according to my notion, there is no time to be lost, for, every moment that you delay, this child is becoming so reduced, that he will soon be beyond all help.”

The two women were silent for some minutes, and the baby, uneasy from the scanty supply of aliment, now detached itself from the breast with a moaning cry, now caressed by the mother, it recommenced its effort to find its unwilling sustenance, till, after a long continued and wearisome struggle, it relapsed into the same state of convulsive irritation, with which it had been seized in the early part of the evening. The precursory symptoms of this new attack, were but too evident, and Liza, doing what she could for the relief of the child, cried, weeping, “Oh! Holy Virgin! aid me. See, the benedetto* has returned again, Oh! this time will be the last! we shall not be in time, — if you do not go for the apothecary — he must have some electuary — oh! run.”

“Blessed daughter, it has just struck midnight, and Messer Nuto, here at the corner, when he has once gone to bed, would not rise for the Pope.”

“But try, at least, and God will reward you. Would you let this innocent die without raising a finger?”

The old woman, who would not have put a foot outside the door alone at this hour, to gain a kingdom, remained standing, without giving the least sign of gratifying Liza’s wish, but she went on saying:

“It seems to me he is getting better; you will see, my lady, that it is nothing.”

Liza, finding that no assistance could be hoped from Niccolosa, and unwilling to leave the child, rushed to the window, saying,

“Oh! will no one pass by, who will aid us?”

She looked into the street; it was pitch dark. She listened, she heard not a footstep. Her heart and her eye turned to the Madonna, a few yards distant, and her gaze falling below the lamp, she saw in its shadow, a something glittering; straining her eyes, she perceived it was an armed man on his knees, apparently absorbed in prayer.

She thought, “He is a soldier, but alone, praying at this hour, he must be a good man,” and, raising her voice, she called him.

“Oh! soldier! Come here to the door, and may God and the Madonna aid you! — we are two women alone with a baby that will die, if you do not help us! God will reward you for this charity.”

* *Infantile convulsions* are called the benedetto by the Florentine women.

The soldier, at this summons, started upon his feet with a promptness that surprised Liza; in the darkness, she could no longer see him, but she perceived from the sound of the footsteps, that he had approached the window, which was about eight feet from the ground.

Feeling sure of his good intentions, she implored him to run to the apothecary and return immediately with some medicine, and she added many thanks and benedictions. The soldier, without uttering a word, went off running.

"He did not even answer me," thought the young woman, "can that be a good sign or a bad one?" and, trembling, she followed, with her ear, the sound of his departing footsteps. After the lapse of a minute, a furious knocking, in the direction of the apothecary's house, informed her that the soldier meant to assist her.

The good Lamberto did mean to assist her, for he had instantly recognized her, though, in the first moment of surprise, he was about to say, "What concern have I with the child of a traitor?" But, checking himself, and taking better counsel, he uttered this prayer internally, "God remit to my mother all her sins, as I remit this woman hers!"

The drowsy apothecary looked out of the window, and showering curses upon the man, who put the street in such an uproar, swore, that if he did not go away, he would make him repent of it. But, on perceiving that the man was dressed in armor, and hearing him say, "Villain apothecary, if you do not open your door, I will throw it into the middle of the street!" he became gentle as a lamb, opened the door, and gave to Lamberto a phial, the contents of which, he promised, should have the desired effect, and Lamberto was soon under the window of Liza, who, no sooner heard his returning footsteps, than she descended to meet him, and awaited him at the street door.

"Oh! it is God alone, who can reward you, and make you happy. The child is a little better — but it may sink again — Oh, brave man! since so great is your kindness, I have another favor to ask — go where the company of Arsoli is quartered, ask for a lancer who was a frate in S. Marco, and is called Fanfulla, tell him, for the love of God, to come here at day-break, I have the most urgent necessity for speaking with him." As she took the medicine, she saw that the soldier's hand trembled. She could not see his face, for he had lowered his visor, but she descried two dark eyes, which flashed so that they almost frightened her, and she heard resound in the hollow helmet, his deep and frequent breathing. She remained irreso-

lute for a moment — then a suspicion flashed through her mind — “this trembling — this endeavoring to conceal himself, — could it be Troilo, who, being regarded as an enemy to the city, and fearing that there might, perhaps, be other people in the house, would not discover himself.” She looked at him more particularly, measured his height, and it seemed to her that everything confirmed her suspicions. “Oh! if he has, at last, remembered me and our Ariguccio — my love has not been spent in vain — without doubt it is he,” and, at last, with streaming eyes, and trembling voice, she said:

“Permit me to know now, to whom I owe such obligations — raise, at least, this visor — speak, good young man, for I almost think I have guessed aright — my heart tells me, that I do not deceive myself — you may speak without suspicion — we are sole alone — I, and a poor old woman, — in this house — there is no cause for distrust.”

And deluded thus by her imagination, which extinguished every doubt, she said, in a low voice, full of passion and of joy, —

“Ah, yes! you are Troilo! You have, at length, remembered your Liza. I knew it! I have never doubted your faith, you know it. Oh! speak! speak! or you will kill me!”

She saw the soldier place his hand upon his visor, raise it slowly, and discover a pallid face, which she did not, at first, recognize, and she started back in terror.

“Heaven grant,” said the young man, “that the faith of Troilo may never fail you, but he is in camp, fighting against his country. He who has just aided you, is Lamberto.” At these words, Liza clung to the door for support. When she could speak, she found herself alone.

At daybreak, Fanfulla knocked at her door. He found her full of agitation, caused by the alarming illness of her child, and the unexpected appearance of Lamberto.

She no sooner saw this man, who, with so much kindness, had succored her in her greatest need, than, with many expressions of gratitude, she discovered to him her intentions, declaring that it was utterly impossible to support such a life any longer, and that, cost what it might, and in whatever way it should be effected, she was resolved to go to the camp, and place herself and child under the protection of Troilo. She besought Fanfulla to be her guide; he endeavored, without success, to convince her of the perils to which she would be exposed, among which he considered not the least, (though this he did not even hint to her,) that of her rejection by Troilo, who was considered a villain by every one, and who would,

probably, employ every means to evade her claims upon him. All the eloquence, all the entreaties of Fanfulla were in vain, and when, after trying every other means, he told her that he *could not* accompany her at any rate, (not knowing how wilful she was,) she, without being angry, thanked him for the kind care he had taken of her, and added, "Adieu, then, God grant you every blessing. I will go alone." Fanfulla, who had spoken thus, only to divert her from her proposed plan, and who, rather than abandon her in the hour of danger, would have sacrificed his life, sighed, and was obliged to have recourse to his accustomed phrase, "I always have to do everything," — and then added, "Lady, make what use of me you please."

Then they began to contrive together, how they should get out of the city, and make their way to the enemy's camp. There was no difficulty about leaving the city, for the gates on the right bank of the Arno were left open, but it would be necessary to find some way of crossing the river, and then to introduce themselves to the soldiers' quarters, protecting the lady from the licentiousness of the soldiers, of whom so many horrible things were told, that the whole country around had been deserted by the inhabitants.

"I," said Fanfulla, "will put on my friar's habit, and underneath, carry my good arms: and you, my lady, if you could find a nun's dress* — and we could tell the sentries that we were seeking alms for the convent — and then — but what am I thinking of? The baby! Nuns do not carry babies in their arms, and still less monks! We might say we found it on the road — heh? No, no, that would be a lame story. Let us consider then. If you could find a tunic belonging to some young friar, some novice, — Oh! but that would be worse — there is still this confounded baby — pity that monks don't have wives! Well, a third plan — let's dress ourselves as gypsies — then we can carry as many babies as we like — yes, yes, that will be the best plan — gypsies go anywhere, and nobody meddles with them. Let me manage, I will find somebody that will lend me a torn jacket, I will get a lute, and you can hunt up some ragged clothes to dress yourself in, tie a bundle on your back, and color your pale face and these little delicate hands: for, to outwit soldiers, I tell you, one must know what he is about. Now, lady, keep up your courage, I will conduct you thither at any rate. Towards five o'clock I

* Before the Council of Trent, the cloistral rules, then much less stringent than afterwards, permitted nuns to go out. Many of them could thus (being extremely poor) gain a living by alms, as the mendicant friars now do.

will come for you, for, God willing, we shall accomplish the business in a couple of hours. Farewell, then, till we meet again."

Fanfulla, upon leaving Liza, went in search of a fisherman, whom he induced to convey his boat a mile beyond the gate of S. Niccolò, where he was to wait, to transport the party to the opposite shore.

At the appointed hour, Fanfulla was at Liza's place of abode: he was equipped in a good coat of mail, a dagger and a short sword at his side; over these, he had drawn a kind of frock, much the worse for wear; on his head he wore a slouched hat, which, however, concealed his cap of steel, and bidding adieu to Niccolosa, they set off, just in the gray of the evening. They went through the Porta la Croce, and, turning to the right, reached the banks of the Arno, which was swollen by the heavy rains, and, following in silence the course of the river, began to ascend against the stream. From time to time, they encountered difficult passes; more than one stream discharging its waters into the Arno, impeded their progress. Then, the good-hearted Fanfulla, would take the lady on his right arm, and the child on his left, and carry them across with slow and steady step.

"How much trouble we give you," said Liza, deeply touched by his kindness, and he, who in fifty-three years of a life, chequered by a thousand perverse accidents, had never known what unhappiness was, (saving the last part of the time that he spent in S. Marco,) answered, —

"Eh! it will take more than a few drops of water, and a little mud, my lady, to hurt my skin—I'm made like the ass, you see, that grows sick in the stall, and to keep him well, he must be worked and beaten."

Then, seeing her weary and disheartened, he tried to raise her spirits, saying:

"You, who never quitted your nurse's leading strings till now, think it is a great thing to go through such places in the night, but never fear, you are with one who would defend you against a hundred. Why, what would you have? If one did not work, he would die. And this is true of all men. And I, who know something about the matter, can tell you, that just when the world seems ready to crush us, in a twinkling, the wheel turns, the wind changes, and we are saved."

Here Liza, who could now scarcely drag herself along, asked leave to rest, and seated on the ground, she turned her streaming eyes towards Florence, from which they had receded little more than half a mile. The atmosphere, occupied by a fog,

dark and light, in the upper regions of the air, but dense and dark towards the horizon, was feebly illumined by the new moon, which was slowly sinking in the west. Her disk appeared red and rayless; she was now just over the towers and edifices of the city, which looked like a brown serrated mass, for not a fire, nor a light interrupted its uniform obscurity: not a sound nor a movement betokened life. A poet would have said, that the ill-fated city was revolving thus, in gloom, her impending fate. No sound but the low distant roar of the waves, which broke against the flood-gates of the mills of the Serristori, struck Liza's ear, and this filled her heart with a sense of inexplicable terror, of which the agonizing thoughts that agitated her, were at once the cause and effect. As long as she remained in Florence, though expelled from her home, she still felt united by certain ties to it and to her family — she could still believe in the possibility of a reconciliation.

Now, by her voluntary departure, it seemed to her that she had broken the last link which connected her with her family, her country, the friends of her childhood, and the dear and perennial memories of the places, where she had known the purest joys, and the briefest trials of her life. Early imbued with the most patriotic sentiments, accustomed from a child to hate the enemies of her country, and to hear those who opposed the doctrines of the *frate*, and the liberties of the State, revealed in no unassured terms, by her father and brothers, she had never been able, notwithstanding her love for Troilo, to eradicate those sentiments, which had for so long a time, appeared to her beautiful and holy, and which, love to Troilo had superseded, but had never entirely destroyed. Now she found herself a rebel to her father's authority, a rebel and an enemy to her country. She felt pursued by the malediction of Niccolo, and by that of all the virtuous citizens, who remained within the walls of Florence, there to die by sword or famine: and looking at the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio, which she was accustomed to consider the personification, so to say, of the popular cause, and of Florentine liberty, it seemed to her like an avenging phantom, that was watching her flight, only to overtake and punish her, with some new and tremendous calamity. And then, to distract her mind from these sad imaginations, she tried to compose herself with the thoughts of Troilo, whom she was soon to meet again: but this hope was disturbed by a doubt, not admitted by her heart, but which obstinately persisted in forcing its way into her mind, which said:

"Are you certain of his faith? Are you sure he will receive you? How can you place such confidence in one, who for more than a year, has never written to you, nor sent you any tidings of his affairs?"

This tormenting suspicion was so painful to her, that she was forced to rise and pursue her way, eager to put an end to such a state of suspense, cost what it might.

They soon found the boat, entered it, and not without difficulty, on account of the opposing force of the current, were transferred to the other side.

Once more on dry land, they resumed their way along the river-side, in order to reach the other side of the hill, on which was situated the villa, then belonging to the Guiccardini, called La Bugia. When Fanfulla thought it was time, they left the river, turned to the right, and crossed the road to Arezzo, passing through the olive yards to ascend the hill. He intended to descend then into the vale of Ema, and reascend at S. Margherita a Montici, a small church occupied by the bands of Sciarra Colonna, not far from the plains of the Giullara, and which might be called the heart of the encampment, it being the head-quarters of the Prince of Orange.

He thought it probable that Troilo, as a gentleman and a lancia-spezziata, that is, an officer in the army, would be found here, or, at any rate, that he might here easily get track of him. But the nearer they approached the end of their journey, the stronger grew his suspicions, that he should have, as the Italians say, *to make a hole in the water*, or, as we phrase it, *look for a needle in a haystack*.

When they were about to ascend the last declivity that leads to S. Margherita, "Now," said Fanfulla, "let us stop here a moment; rest yourself again somewhat, for this ascending and descending must have wearied you pretty well. And since, God be praised, we have not as yet met a soul, let us now contrive to get out of this business with honor."

So saying, he took from his pocket a loaf of bread and a gourd full of wine, and handing both to Liza, he said:

"This will revive your spirits."

"You have thought of everything," said Liza, who, unused to such hardships, felt extremely exhausted, and she ate a little of the bread and drank sparingly of the wine, and never could restorative have been offered more opportunely.

But Fanfulla not only desired to restore to her limbs a little vigor, but he also wished to fortify her mind, and prepare her for the event, whatever it might be, whether Troilo would openly repulse and spurn her, or, perhaps, receive her in such a way that it would amount to nearly the same thing.

So, carefully studying his words, he said, at last :

"Now, Madonna Liza, see what my plan is. As soon as we get near S. Margherita, you will hide yourself among the olive trees : I will go on before, and as soon as I find out where he is, I will conduct you to him ; it is better not to tell him who you are—and then you must be prepared—you must know beforehand, that soldiers, in time of war, have a thousand things to vex them : suppose, for instance, in some action, something goes wrong, then they get out of temper—they fly into a passion for nothing : I have experienced it myself ; but you must not think anything of that. He might be displeased at your exposing yourself to such perils, with a child of such tender age ; he might say some bad word to you. Arm yourselt, then, with patience, and think, it is only his way ; for, to stand all day with so many pounds weight of iron on the shoulders, in the rain and the cold, with a thousand other discomforts, it gives a man rather a rough manner. But you, with your loving ways, it will not be difficult for you—and then I may be mistaken, but I even hope and believe that he will be astonished and pleased to meet you after so long a time."

And he added to himself :

"Only once give me the word to conduct you out of this camp, for, if nothing else, if you come to harm, I can keep a good look-out, and put you into the right way."

And such was the affection he felt for Liza, and such his pity for her distress, that he had promised himself, that, if things came to the worst, he would make her cause his own, and he was not a man to fail of his word.

They resumed their journey, and, after another half hour's clambering, finding themselves at about half a musket shot from Santa Margherita, Fantulla thought it was time to stop ; and seeing a hedge that would serve admirably as a hiding-place for Liza, he concealed her in its shade, taking care to open a passage with his hands between the dense and crowded branches. Among these shrubs there were many briars, and it was so dark, that he was made aware of their presence only by their prickling his fingers, but the worst of it was, that one of the thorns, when he withdrew the hand with which he had bent it aside, and it returned by its elasticity to its original place, flew against the child's cheek. Until this moment, the child had been nearly all the time carried by Fantulla, and the motion of walking had soothed it to sleep, but now, rudely scratched by the thorn, it awoke and screamed with all its might. Both hastily placed their hands on its mouth, but, partly from the fear of suffocating it, and partly from the struggles of the

child, they were unable to prevent the noise from being heard at the encampment of Colonna.

Fanfulla, looking up, discovered immediately through the olive trees, many bright points glittering like glow-worms, moving up and down, and round about, and with his practised eye, he at once perceived that they were soldiers, with the lighted cords of their arquebuses, who were coming in the direction of the cry.

Their steps and voices soon sounded near, and a Spanish soldier, in advance of the rest, cried with a brutal laugh :

"Ahora, ahora, voy á darle tal santi guada á este niño que no ha despertarse hasta el día del juicio." ("Now, now, I will put a mark upon this child, so that he will not wake till the day of judgment.")

"Teneos," cried another, "veamos antes — podría ser alguna dama principal de esta tierra, que se huyese y me gustarían mas sus florines que los cascós de este hideputa — no parece sino que ya se le salen las tripas ? I que garganta que tienes, hijo mio," added a third. ("Wait — let us see first. It may be some grand lady who is running away. I had rather have her money than the brains of this son of a —. Oh ! don't you see his bowels are already gushing out. What a windpipe you have at your command, my son.")

"Oh ! the vile dog !" cried another soldier, "I will wager my head against a mouthful of tart, that he is the son of a friar, and he thinks he is singing mass, — now, now, little whelp, here is the pap and the *bombo*.*

If Fanfulla had been alone, he would have known very speedily what to do. He would have flung himself among them, and, with sword in the right hand, and dagger in the left, he would soon have found himself clear of his enemies in this world or the other. But here it was necessary to use diplomacy. He said to Liza, who, straining her child to her breast, commended herself to Heaven, "Never fear, leave everything to me," — then turning to the Spaniard who arrived first, he said, "Detengase, señor caballero," (the Italian soldiers of this time were almost all familiar with the Spanish language, for the same reason that twenty-five years ago, our soldiers were as much so with the French,) "Detengase — somos pobres gitanos, y venamos al campo para sonar y tener regocijadas á v. m. ! Somos pobres ahora — però éramos ricos no hay mas que un momento — llevábamos un bolsillo con cien florines — y algunos soldados alemanes que se andaban por ahí nos le han quitado."

* A word used by Italian children in asking for drink.

Los majaderos me han despolvoreado las espaldas a mí con sus alatarías, y a esta pobrecita le han dado un recio bofetón que ha cogido aun á este niño — Allá, allá, miren entre los árboles, aun los veo que se van á priesa — alcancenlos por dios, y del bolsillo nos darán lo que quisieren." "Stop, sir cavalier, stop! We are poor gypsies, and we came to the camp to play on the lute, and amuse the gentlemen — we are poor now, but a moment ago we were rich — we had a purse of five hundred florins, and some German soldiers, who were passing along, took it away from us. These rascals pounded my shoulders with their halberds, and gave this poor woman a box on the ear that hit the child too. There they are! there! look! among the trees! I see them still — there they go, running! If you can catch them, you may give us what you please from the purse.")

The soldiers approached, and, observing as well as the darkness would allow, the miserable garb of Fanfulla and the woman, and taking hold of the lute that hung at his neck, they gave credence to his words. He, in the meantime, pretending to be greatly excited, continued to stimulate them to follow upon the track of the robbers, pointing to the declivity covered with olive-trees, and swearing that he could see them still. In indicating the place, however, where he said he could see the thieves, he was careful to point in an opposite direction to that which he intended to take, as soon as he should find himself at liberty. Knowing, also, the jealousy and hostility that prevailed among the various nations, which composed the Imperial army, the soldiers of which, never met at their respective quarters, without some sort of an affray, he thought he would lay this accusation on the shoulders of the Germans. And this fact is mentioned, to prove that Fanfulla was not so much of a fool, as some malevolent and envious persons would fain have us believe.

To conclude, these soldiers fell into the snare. It is true, that, much as they peered through the olive-trees, they could discover nothing that moved, or that had the form of a man, but they thought that the gypsy man might have better eyes, or, that, perhaps, he might be like a cat, and could see in the dark. In short, and the whole scene took place while one might say *ave Maria*, they rushed on in haste, leaping down through the olive-yard, threatening and swearing with terrible oaths, that if they could lay hands on these German poltroons, they would cut them to pieces. "Only think, the excommunicated thieves! they have come as far as this to seize their booty! even to our camp!" and continuing to run, they were soon at a distance, and as soon as the sound of their footsteps and voices

ceased, Fanfulla breathed freely once more, and he said, laughing, "A lucky chase to you, my lads! Now, madonna, let us begone before they return."

Poor Liza, through very fear, more dead than alive, knowing, however, the necessity of their saving themselves while there was yet time, crept out of the hedge, and though scarcely able to stand, resumed her way, supported by Fanfulla, who, with the other arm carried the baby, which was now quiet again. Changing his first intention, he decided to approach as near as possible to the plains of the Guillari, and the villa of the Guicciardini, then occupied by the Prince, and it pleased God to permit them to arrive, without further accident, at the foot of the wall of one of the nearest houses. Here, there was no hedge, but a stack of dry wheat, where the woman could be concealed, and this time, he took special care that the child should not get hurt.

Fanfulla now encouraged her anew, and then set off in search of Troilo, and having found the main road, he came directly to the little open green in the centre of the village. This green was of triangular form, surrounded by peasant's cottages on two sides, the third side being occupied by the front of the little church, the only one in that part of the country: in the centre was a fountain with a sloping roof, and at one side, a beam with rope and pulley for torture, and cross beams, from which almost every day saw dangle some unfortunate; some peasant, detected in the act of carrying provisions to Florence; some spy or soldier, guilty of insubordination; for, to govern an army in this century, it was necessary to make use of the cord, and military etiquette had not then ruled, that death by hanging was dishonorable, while that by the musket-shot of one's comrades, left his honor unimpaired. But we ought to compassionate these poor cinquecentisti (people of the sixteenth century), they, perhaps, had the idea, that the shame was in the crime, and not in its punishment. This village green, over which one now passes freely, at all hours of the day, meeting only quiet peasants, who answer one's inquiries in their harmonious and correct tongue, or troops of citizens, rustivating in the suburbs; these cottages, which now present the images of quiet, contented poverty; these lanes astir with children of all sizes, and women engaged in the useful and cleanly employment of braiding straw hats; all, at the time of Fanfulla's arrival were thronged with foreigners, and full of disorder and uproar. The ground was muddy and filthy, broken up by the tramp of men and horses, the houses filled with soldiers, the walls soiled and smoked, the little church reduced to a tavern, and the green

himself, encumbered with booths, under which were sutlers with bread and all kinds of provisions, barrels of wine, &c., who had erected their tents here with tolerably good judgment, knowing that the sight of the cord, and the gallows, was an excellent system of mnemonics for those adventurers, who might forget to pay their score.

While Fanfulla was hesitating to whom to direct his inquiries with regard to Troilo, he observed a stir among the people in the vicinity of the scaffold, and he then saw a man ascend a ladder placed against it, and adjust the noose, and make the necessary preparations for an execution. Approaching out of curiosity, he saw at a little distance from the scaffold, at the foot of a wall, the person, probably destined to punishment. It was apparently a woman, with her hands tied behind her, who, on her knees before a Capuchin friar, was making the last confession. Fanfulla marvelled that a woman should be doomed to the gallows, but his wonder increased when he saw projecting from beneath her garments, the sheath of a sword.

Just as he was about to ask what crime the person had committed, he saw coming that way, an officer, who, making way for himself through the crowd, went up to one of the soldiers who guarded the criminal, and asked him why that woman was to be hanged.

"Say rather, that young man," answered the soldier, laughing. "It is a singular affair — I was not there, but here is Fruga, who *was* there — he is a Florentine, and he says he knows this lad — and his family — he is the son of a Piagnone, a silk-weaver."

"But what has he done?" asked the officer, impatiently.

"It is said that he attempted to kill a certain Messer — what is his name? Tror — Trojano — no matter what his name is — but he is a lancia-spezzata here of the Prince. This gentleman, it seems, had seduced the sister of the young man, and he, to take vengeance upon him, came into the camp at dusk dressed as a woman, and posting himself in an out-of-the-way place, sent a boy to the gentleman, to say to him, that a young woman wished to speak with him. The man was mad, for fearless of detection, he came alone. The other went, but he was followed at a little distance by four soldiers. He no sooner appeared, than the supposed woman, drawing a rapier, cried out, "Defend thyself! traitor!" The gentleman, with his sword, warded-off two or three thrusts, and then his bravos coming to his rescue, leaped upon the shoulders and arms of the young man, bound him, and now he is to be strangled by the executioner."



The officer shook his head and shrugged his shoulders, as if he would say, "and this is all his crime!"

Fanfulla mused thoughtfully over what he had just heard, it seemed to him, (though he had not been able to learn the names of the parties,) that all this business was connected with Liza; and, meantime, at the foot of the scaffold, it was, indeed, poor Bindo, who was preparing, as a good Christian, for the last journey.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN the early part of the same night in which Liza left Florence, passing through such perils and discomfort in search of Troilo, he was enjoying a comfortable supper in the villa Guicciardini, with the Prince of Orange, and a large company of officers and gentlemen, who passed their time there very agreeably when their military duties did not call them elsewhere; for there they found provided a luxurious table, cards, dice, and all the amusements, which could be had at that time and place. Although, through the penuriousness of Pope Clement, there was, in this army great lack of money, and the soldiers, on account of their scanty pay, fared hardly, and often rose in mutiny, their leaders, however, had discretion enough to regulate matters so that *they*, at least, should suffer neither hunger nor thirst, for they always managed to keep a good table.

On this point of military tactics, it seems as if all great military leaders have been agreed, before and since the invention of gunpowder; and the Prince of Orange, who, at the early age of twenty-seven years, was one of the boldest and most skilful Generals of which history makes mention, had never shown himself behindhand in this respect.

The villa Guicciardini, still in good keeping in our time, is situated on the road leading from the plain of the Giullari to S. Margherita a Montici. It consists of two square and rather contracted buildings of two stories, joined by two battlemented walls, with an open space between, which served as a courtyard. In the wall next the street is the great gate, with its arch and massive side-posts of *bagnato*.* The windows of the lower floor, disposed in beautiful proportion, and at agreeable distances, according to the Bramantesco style, are furnished with stout iron gratings, that reach from the upper cornice to the broad projecting window-sill of stone, supported by two brackets.

* *Bagnato*, a composition of gravel and mortar.



In the building at the left hand of the street entrance, were lodged the Prince, and his gentlemen and pages; that on the right was appropriated to the servants, the baggage and the horses.

In the court-yard, illuminated by the red glare of resinous torches, were many vases of orange and lemon trees, that had been covered up by the gardeners, to save them from the rude hands of the soldiers, and which now served for a rest for the halberds of the German foot-soldiers who kept the gate. Beyond, near the wall, were numerous horses saddled and bridled, attended by servants, awaiting their masters, who, enjoying themselves with their dice and their wine, near a good fire, in well-furnished rooms, gleaming with light, took about as much thought of the discomfort, cold and weariness of their men and beasts, as does an English lord, of the hired hack that awaits him at the door of a ball-room, in a temperature of fifteen degrees below zero.

The supper being ended, and the table cleared, cards and dice were produced. The Prince, robed in a mantle of crimson velvet, lined with gray minnever, wore underneath only a leathern doublet and hose, in order that he might easily and speedily assume his armor if circumstances required. He was playing at *lansquenè* with Don Ferrante Gonzaga, Pier Luigi Farnese, and half a score of Spanish and German officers. He had before him, a heap of gold florins, of which he staked a handful at a time, and, however fortune turned, his face retained the same proud impassive expression, for the rules and maxims then in vogue among the nobility required, that, if one played high, he must lose with indifference, and pay up without delay.

To satisfy these laws, did he, day after day, according to Varchi, distribute among his companions in play, the money sent to him by Pope Clement for the pay of the army. The soldiers were dying of hunger, but the debt of honor was satisfied. Of two evils, one should always choose the least.

In different parts of the room, seated in huge arm chairs, or pacing back and forth, were men chatting and laughing, talking of the chase, of love affairs, of military exploits, of disputes, of duels; in an adjoining room, many of the younger portion of the company were witnessing exercises in fencing, and at this moment, a circle had gathered about Troilo and Alessandro Vitelli, who, in a fencing bout, with sword and dagger, displayed nearly equal dexterity, though, in the opinion of the best judges, the former was thought to have the advantage.

On the chairs and tables were thrown in disorder, the hats,

helmets, gloves, swords and cloaks of the guests; from the walls, painted in fresco, on whose panels were represented many historical scenes, inclosed in frames of stucco in bas-relief, hung arms, pennons, banners, and all kinds of warlike gear, and the nails which supported them, driven recklessly into the pictures, had marred and spoiled them.

At one end of the room, yawned an enormous fire-place, its broad mantle-shelf resting on two figures of huntsmen, placed against the jams, holding each a horn to their mouths; the frame work which they supported with their heads and arms, was covered with the most beautiful foliage, animals and heads; and above, were two nymphs in a reclining posture, holding up between them a shield, on which were the three hunting horns of the Guicciardini.

A man of middle stature, who already showed signs of premature old age, was sitting in a great arm-chair at the fire; alone, absorbed in his own thoughts, he appeared neither to hear nor heed the laughter and the clamor around him. He wore the Florentine *lucco* and *cappuccio*; with one elbow resting on the arm of his chair, supporting his cheek with his closed fist, he was steadily watching the creeping, winding motions of the flames, and according to the tenor of his thoughts, he would now knit his brows, now shake his head, and now smile out of the corners of his mouth, but his smile expressed anything but satisfaction. This person was Baccio Valori, Commissary for the Pope to the Imperial army. A man of shrewd wit, and of great experience in affairs of state, desirous to be, and to be considered exceedingly crafty, he must, however, have learned a few years later, that honesty, after all, is the best policy, since his most subtle cunning could not save his neck from the axe of Cosimo I. Upon the result of the attempt upon Florence, depended the fulfilment of his ambitious hopes, or his total ruin. If the city should be conquered, and placed again under the Medicean yoke, he would rise to the first rank, would obtain honors and riches; he then would be the *good*, the *prudent*, the friend of order and the laws.

If, on the contrary, the people triumphed and retained their liberty, he remained in the class of rebels, despoiled of his property, and in the despicable condition of a deluded traitor.

But the difficulties in the way of his success were many and serious.

He must keep the camp well supplied with munitions and provisions, while the Pope on the one hand, was complaining of the expenditure, and on the other, the Prince, as we have seen, was not the best of stewards, even of the scanty supplies of

money, which came so grudgingly from the Apostolic Chamber. Besides, a suspicion had arisen in the mind of Clement VII., that the Prince intended to make the acquisition of Florence for himself, and to Valori was entrusted the care of keeping a watch upon his movements, and counteract, if necessary, his machinations. And, finally, the party of the Piagnoni, which he had hoped to terrify by merely encamping an army under its walls, now showed itself so full of courage, and so prompt in defence, that the result of the war might with reason be questioned.

Deeming it of vital importance to have some one in Florence, who should keep him informed from day to day of the movements of the opposing party, he had endeavored to maintain a secret correspondence with several Pallescana, but by them, suspected as they were by the government, he was tardily or ill-informed, and effected little or nothing.

He might have reckoned much upon Troilo, who, if he could once get into Niccolò's family, and keep up a secret communication with Valori, this last would find himself, so to say, in the very heart of the Piagnoni party, and would have the means of knowing their most secret thoughts and intentions.

But he had little to hope from this young man. Although he had promised to Malatesta to engage in this enterprise, as we saw in chapter sixth, and although he did not in so many words refuse to fulfil his promise, yet he showed himself by no means anxious to do so; now finding one pretext and now another, he suggested a thousand obstacles, and, in fact, could not make up his mind to exchange the life of the camp, — a little hard sometimes, but always free, full of licentiousness, and seasoned with the pleasures he enjoyed in the house of the Prince, — for a loathsome and melancholy life in a besieged city, rife with sermons, processions and penances, where he should have to be in one of the most austere families, and under the eye of the most rigid and most justly feared man of the Piagnoni party.

If, then, Baccio Valori, with so many interests at stake, and harassed by so many perplexing thoughts, lived wretched, and remained alone and melancholy, without participating in the merriment that surrounded him, we need not marvel; but, on the contrary, thank God that it is ever harder to play the knave than the honest man.

And now the game at swords being ended, a troop of young men entered the room, and, playing mad pranks among themselves, came rushing in boisterous hilarity towards the fire; and in trying to outstrip each other, they rudely jostled the

arm-chair in which Baccio was seated. He turned round angrily and began to grumble, but Troilo, coming close up to him, said :

" There, now, don't be angry, Messer Baccio ; drive away these gloomy thoughts, for your face every day is a yard long ; don't you know that a hundred years' moping will not pay a farthing's debt ? "

" You are a great fool, and if you attended to something else besides these tricks, it would be better for you. Now sit down here for a moment, for you must be tired of the din you have been making all this time. "

" Tired ? But now, Messer Baccio, if you would like to see a little good fencing, we will accommodate you. "

" Away with your nonsense, I am in no mood for joking. "

Then, with a conciliating air, and in tones almost of entreaty, he continued :

" But as to Florence, when do you think of going there ? You promised it to Signor Malatesta, and to me. Do you know how important it is for us, to have a man there whom we can confide in ? "

" Wait a minute, Messer Baccio, " answered the young man, dragging another arm-chair close to his, and stretching himself out at full length in it, he added, " I understand ; you have a sermon on your stomach, that you want to be delivered of. Well, here I am, ready to receive it ; you will feel better after it is over. Say on, for I find this arm-chair so comfortable, that I shall not move again very soon. "

" You jest, Troilo, but if I speak, it is for your good. " He laid his hand on the young man's shoulder, and then, lowering his voice, he said :

" What a malcap you are ! do you not know that an opportunity like this of gaining the favor of Pope Clement, and the Signori Medici, would be bought by many a one at any price ; many a one would consider himself very lucky to have such a prize fall into his hands, and you — "

" And I — I do not refuse it, " answered Troilo, twisting in his chair, with a gesture of impatience, " and you are very zealous in this matter. It is easily said, go to Florence, and live with Niccòlo — well, I am there ; have turned Piagnone ! yes, and he, of course, is to believe me, to receive me into his family, and I am to know everything, and inform you of all their secrets. Eh ! Messer Baccio, you travel by post ! "

" That there may be some difficulties, I do not deny ; but the affairs of *this world* are not transacted without our agency,



we are to have the trouble of that; and if you do no more about this business than you have done as yet, we shall have to wait forever, expecting the manna to fall from heaven; if the thing were not so difficult and perilous, you would not have been promised such rich rewards."

"Oh! as to that," interrupted Troilo, "I shall have fairly earned them. Think how delightful it must be to live with Niccolò! it will be all one with keeping house in the cave of S. Antonio. By-the-by, I must exercise myself in repeating my prayers. I must have at hand some passage, some prophecy of the Frate; let me see, I remember one of them: *Florentis renovabitur*, and then *flagellabitur* — no, I have got it exactly wrong — it should begin with *bastonabitur*, and here we have hit it. Ah! and then — you seem to think it is a fine joke, to go away, for Heaven knows how long, to play — nothing less — the loving, faithful husband! If the Pope has a spark of honor, for this alone I deserve the hat of a cardinal!"

"You're a sad profligate; but I hear she is exceedingly beautiful, and now it is so long since you have seen her, that it will be almost like a new love."

"Yes, *almost*; you have well said."

"And then comfort yourself with the assurance, that, when we are masters of Florence, and everything in our own power, I will find you a maiden of such a high family, and with such a dowry, that you shall be under eternal obligations to me. In short —"

"In short, I will go; I will go. It is all one; I am condemned to hear sermons; here, from you; in Florence, from the monks. If for nothing else, for the sake of variety, I think I should prefer to hear theirs; for yours, my good Messer Baccio, begin to grow tedious."

At this point in the conversation, many of the gentlemen present pressed round the fire. They knew, that for a long time, Valori had fruitlessly endeavored to enlist Troilo in this honorable undertaking; they had often discussed the subject, and had joked about it not a little. Now Troilo, having announced his final decision, added:

"It will, however, be well to give a specimen of the discourse that I shall hold in the grand council, to celebrate my conversion." And mounting upon his chair, he began in a whining, nasal tone.

"A ray of the divine grace, most reverend gentlemen, a ray of celestial grace, most excellent magistrates, descending upon this unworthy head, through the intercession of our sainted and holy Fra Jeronimo, has at last, most worthy people; clothiers,

old weavers, most noble apothecaries, most illustrious and most respected butchers, masons, dyers and leather-dressers: has at last dispelled the darkness in which I was miserably groping, delivered by the wicked example and counsel of that impious, knavish, and most depraved and detestable man, that vessel of every execrable, heinous and abominable sin, Messer Baccio Valori!"

At these words, the laughter became so noisy and riotous, that the sermon was interrupted, and the disturbed card-players turned angrily around, but the Prince quickly put an end to the uproar: raising his head and pronouncing in a loud voice the single monosyllable "Peace!" he silenced every sound so completely, that the voice of a servant at the door was distinctly heard:

"Messer Troilo, a boy is asking for you."

"Let him come in," said Troilo, without moving, and a boy was introduced, who said to him:

"A lady wishes to speak with you immediately: she told me to say that she would await you in the Strada di Batocelli."

Troilo descended hastily from his pulpit, saying:

"Let us stop the sermon another time. One must not keep ladies waiting;"—then with a serious face—"It is, however, a great pity, that these confounded women must come even to compel to bother me. Eh! but I pity them!" He gave a deep sigh—"See what it is to be a handsome young man! Come, boys, go before, and show me the way." His companions joked him, and complimented him upon his good luck, and Valori said to him, following him to the door, "Perhaps it is Liza."

"That would be choose to the macaroni: now, if I guess aright, and this opportunity offers itself beforehand, I shall know how to use it for your benefit."

Troilo went out, and instead of Liza, found Bindo, who, more willing than wise, had been bent upon revenging his sister, from the day of her expulsion from her father's house, but who had never, until now, been at liberty to carry his design into effect.

If Troilo had gone alone, Bindo would probably have succeeded in dispatching him; but, as the former started with the key for a guard, he gave a signal to four soldiers to follow him at a distance, and so the thing ended just as we have narrated at the end of the preceding chapter.

What a pity, if it was concerted to poison, and it was proposed to murder him, Troilo might easily have succeeded, by a word to the official, whose forlorn situation he had taken into consideration, and punish all intriguing men, or military men. He was on the point of doing so, but then he thought better of it.

"Let him hang; perhaps this adventure will prevent that cursed expedition to Florence. I do not think it will enter the head of this poltroon of a Baccio, to send me into the house of a man, whose son has been hanged by my means."

So, leaving the public square, he walked slowly towards the villa Guicciardini. But Baccio, who could not help suspecting that something might be made out of this adventure, to further his designs, and who was not a man to neglect little things, knowing that mighty events often spring from most trivial causes, could not be contented to await his return; but went out soon after Troilo's departure, and proceeding towards the Piazza, met one of the soldiers who had aided in arresting Bindo, and who was telling the story to one of his comrades.

Valori anxiously inquired what had happened, and he had no sooner learned the story that a son of Niccolò was about to be hanged, than he began to run with all speed, and arrived, fortunately, just as the poor lad, with one foot on the first round of the ladder, was about to mount the second.

Great matter of surprise was it, to see the Commissary of the camp appear in that place, forcing his way through the crowd with words and pushes; so much so, that the hangman suspended his operations, and Valori, having given orders to unbind and liberate from the noose the youth, whose face was white as bleached cloth, spoke encouragingly to him, bade him fear for nothing, and taking him by the hand led him out of the crowd.

"This alone was wanting," muttered Baccio between his teeth, thinking of the risk just run, of having all his plans overturned by the death of Bindo, and as rogues are well known among themselves, he suspected at once the calculation of Troilo, in suffering this man to be put to death. Still continuing in the direction of the villa, with Bindo by the hand, he said in his heart,

"Troilo, Troilo! you are a young fox, and I — an old one. What if I should be outwitted, after all? But I comfort myself with the thought, that things will go my way, and not yours." Arriving at the house, he consigned the youth to his servants, ordering them to furnish him with food and wine, and prepare a bed for him; and then again re-assuring him with kind words, he returned to the hall, where Troilo soon after made his appearance.

"If it had not been for me," said Baccio, slapping him on the shoulder, "your brother-in-law would now be swinging his heels in the air; now thank me, for with this youth would have died all your hopes of gaining the favor of the Pope."

"In truth, I am under immense obligation to you," said Troilo, with a marble visage, (if the expression may be used,) in which it was impossible to discover a trace of what he really thought at that moment. Impossible to most, but not to Baccio, who justly divined his thoughts, and internally enjoyed his vexation.

Fanfulla, meantime, who had seen the preparations for the execution of the young man, and the hurried arrival of the Commissary himself to liberate him, continued his way, after the crowd had dispersed, and arrived at the Prince's headquarters soon after Baccio.

A servant, at his request, entered the room in which the company were assembled, and said to Troilo :

"There is a man outside, he looks like a gypsy, who says he has a message for you from a lady of Florence — he will not tell whom."

"By my troth," said Troilo, "all the world is playing tricks upon me to-night ! Tell him to go and be hanged, and her too."

"No, no, wait," interrupted Valori ; and taking the young man by the arm, he dragged him out, saying, "Don't be so passionate ; hear what he has to say first." Arrived in the ante-chamber, where Fanfulla was waiting, Baccio pretended to go out, but concealed himself behind a tapestried door, where he could hear every word that was said.

Fanfulla made his reverence to Troilo, and told him that a lady, with whom he was well acquainted, had come from Florence expressly to see him, and was waiting for him at a little distance. Interrogated then by the young man as to who she was and what she wanted, Fanfulla put on an air of mystery, and, half laughing, he said :

"You will see who it is, and what she wants, and you will not have to repent of taking the trouble to come where she is."

"Oh, speak out ! Hear me, my good fellow, I have certain suspicions — tell me, is it Liza, the daughter of Niccolò de' Lapi ?"

"You have hit it exactly," answered Fanfulla, who thought he read in Troilo's face a disposition favorable to Liza's hopes ; "come, then, for the poor creature is waiting for you, as if you were an angel from heaven."

While he was speaking, Valori, who was still listening in concealment, raised the tapestry, and motioned to Troilo to go immediately.

"Let us set off, then," said Troilo ; and, preceded by Fan-

fulla, without taking any one else with him, the lady being, as his guide said, concealed behind the last house in the hamlet, and at a very short distance.

What were the actual feelings of Troilo at this moment, it would be extremely difficult to judge. The mysteries of the human heart are so profound, and the good there, is so mixed with evil, and in a manner so inexplicable, that it is sometimes a most arduous matter to judge the greatest villains.

Perhaps, at the moment of putting his hand irremediably to this dark deed, his conscience uttered a last monitory cry. The idea of seeing again this miserable young woman, who had suffered so much for him, who committed herself so entirely to his love; to fold her again in his arms, and then to make use of this same confiding love as a net to entrap her dearest friends, and thus throw them into the hands of their most implacable enemies, all this was so vile and so horrible, that it was not possible, knave as he was, to set about it without some degree of perturbation.

But the voice of his good angel could not make itself heard, all possessed as he was by the desire of future greatness, which painted itself vividly in his imagination, and by the arrogant self-exculpation which persuaded him that it was, after all, no great harm to deceive a girl of the lower class, when the question turned upon the state and fortunes of a gentleman. That state, then, of doubt and remorse, if indeed it ever had any existence, was but momentary, and he steeled his heart beforehand, against being moved by anything Liza might say, and, to quiet his misgivings completely, he said in his heart:

"What great harm have I done to this girl? What great affair is it? To have a child by a gentleman! As if that was something that did not happen every day. But I will not do like many others; I will give her money enough to get a husband to suit herself.

While Troilo walked along, full of these thoughts, Liza, who with trembling heart had been expecting him for about a half an hour, though it seemed to her at least two hours, was dreading some new misfortune.

On the point of again meeting him whom she had so much loved, her heart, spurning every suspicion, revelled in the sole idea of finding herself once more folded in his arms.

But the poor creature afflicted herself by thinking:

"God knows how he will find me, hardships and starvation have so wasted me. Oh! what would I not give to be as beautiful as I once was." And to make herself look as well as

possible, she smoothed her hair, and stripping off her miserable gypsy disguise, remained in the same dress in which she had left her father's house, and, in fact, the only one she possessed, and in all these impromptu toilet operations, she was careful not to make the least noise, fearing every moment to be heard and discovered.

Finally she heard the footsteps of men in the street; she listened with suspended breath; they came nearer, they leaped the hedge, they approached her hiding place, the darkness prevented her from seeing any one, but she soon heard Fanfulla's voice:

"Be of good cheer, madonna, here he is in person."

"The young woman attempted to rise, but her strength failed her, and she fell on her knees, saying:

"Oh! my Troilo! do I see you once more before I die?"

The young man raised her from the ground and pressed her to his breast with words of such tenderness and passion, that for a few moments Liza lay fainting in his arms.

But knowing the spirit in which he uttered them, we have not the heart to repeat them.

The good Fanfulla, on witnessing this scene, drew his sturdy hand across his eyes, saying:

"If I don't take care, I shall cry myself."

Troilo then took his little boy in his arms, bestowing numerous caresses upon him, and Liza, clinging to his arm, said:

"And I was afraid you would chide me for coming so by night, and with this baby! Wretch that I was! I ought to have known my Troilo better! Pardon me for thus wronging you! Oh! but now don't let us think of anything else. We are again united. There is no longer anything to trouble your poor Liza, all is forgotten. It is time! I have suffered so much, do you know? I will tell you all some time. But now we will not think about it."

And so saying, all three set off to return to the village, and Liza continued in a lower tone:

"No, we will not think of it, for the feelings change in a moment, but the fact is another thing. That of your poor Liza never fades from you ever. Oh! how different will it look to you now! But do not be dismayed by that, my Troilo, now that I am so happy, my former looks will return. Have patience for a few days, and when I shall have recovered my strength, if it please God to restore my beauty, I will tell you, it is all your work, my love. Alas! poor me, to think how soon you will see me, face to face."

"Nonsense, you little fool, what whims are these? You

wrong me, and if you do not drive away these thoughts, I shall be angry."

Poor Liza, fearful of saying anything to displease him, stopped instantly, and pressing close to his side, she only added:

"Oh! my love, you are right, and I am a fool to distrust you."

They had now reached the villa. Baccio, meantime, admonished, by his success shortly before, with regard to Bindo, to keep his eye upon the movements of Troilo, had not lost sight of him in this second exit.

He found him just crossing the street, and approaching him without appearing to notice Liza and Fanfulla, he said to Troilo, "Stop a moment; I have something of importance to say to you."

Troilo whispered to Liza, "This man is the commissary of the camp. I should not like to have him suspect who you are, for he is exceedingly jealous of the Piagnoni, and everybody that has anything to do with them. Just step over to the other side of the street, and wait till I have done talking to him."

Liza, anxious to comply with his wishes, quitted his arm and crossed softly over to the darkest side of the street, and Troilo approached Valori, who asked him in a tone of delight, "Is it Liza?"

"The very same."

"Now then," resumed Baccio, "I wish to inform you, that to give a better color to your departure for Florence, I have thought of a plan, which, it seems to me, is not a bad one. Enough, it is no time now to go into particulars. Your servant was here just now,—find means to send her with him to your quarters, and stay here, and we will discuss the matter."

Troilo returned to Liza and said to her, "Business of importance forces me to leave just now, but go with the man I shall send to you in a few moments, and fear nothing. Give him your orders for whatever you want, and he will provide you with everything. Farewell, Liza, be of good cheer, I shall speedily rejoin you."

So saying, he left her, and went in search of one of his servants by the name of Michele, (the same one who, in the garb of a priest, had performed the pretended marriage,) whom he ordered to conduct Liza to the Torre del Gallo, where he lodged, and to provide her with everything she might want on her arrival.

"But are you sure, sir, that she will not recognize me?"

"Oh! there is no fear of that," answered Troilo; "in the

first place, she was so frightened that morning, that she did not even look at you, and then it was so long ago, and you are dressed so differently, and with that long beard which you now wear, the devil himself would not recognize you. Go, go, never fear. In talking to her, be sure, above all things, to tell her all the lies you can think of, to make her believe that I think, have thought, and shall always think only of her."

"I understand. In short, I am to do as I have done with all your other mistresses."

"Exactly."

The servant went on, and his villain master rejoined Valori, and, repairing to the hall, they seated themselves at the fire.

"Now listen to me," said Baccio, "henceforth if you *will* do what you *can* do, the thing cannot fail. I have been thinking, that even if you go to Florence with Liza, this will not open Niccolò's door to you. It will be necessary for you to have some merit in his eyes. To this end, Bindo will serve our turn marvellously well." And here he went on explaining the new deception he had contrived, but, as the reader will soon see it carried into execution, it is superfluous to recount it here.

They then agreed upon the signals which Troilo was to make from the roof of Messer Benedetto de' Nobili; the cipher, that should be used in their written correspondence; fixed upon the place where the letters should be left and taken, by men who, not knowing whence their orders came, in case of their falling into the hands of the enemy, could not reveal who had sent them, if ever so much disposed to do so.

Baccio then added many counsels, promises and encouragements, and, among other things, charged Troilo to make much of the frati of S. Marco, and to be with them as much as possible, knowing them to have the greatest influence, upon the mind of Niccolò.

"I will give you a note for Nobili," said he, "that you can sew in your clothes, or easily conceal anywhere. Now, then, Troilo, show yourself a gallant fellow, and get you gone, for when I think with how little trouble you will gain a rich reward, I really envy you. Now go to the Torre del Gallo. I will meet you there and bring you money that will serve for your expenses while you are there. Meantime, welcome your lady, and make her as happy as you can. Her happiness will be short-lived, it is true, but I am not one of those rascals who want to make people suffer, when there is nothing to be gained by it."

Troilo could not help saying to himself, "You are a most

consummate villain!" He rose, bade adieu to Valori, and taking leave of the Prince, he proceeded to his lodgings, thinking all the way, how admirably contrived was this new stratagem of Valori, and feeling for him that reverential admiration, which one knave always feels for another who is a greater knave than himself.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE slopes of the hills which overhang Florence, on its southern side, are included within its walls, so that from the *Via de' Bardi* to the gate of S. Giorgio, the city rises almost in amphitheatre, and beyond its precincts, the ascent gradually rises, rich in olive-trees, vineyards and dwellings. Half-way up the declivity is situated Giramonte, and on the crest of the mountain whence one descends into the Val d'Ema, stands the Torre del Gallo, where the Count Piermaria di S. Secondo had his quarters, and where, also, lodged Troilo degli Ardinghelli. This edifice does not consist of a tower merely, as its name would seem to indicate. The tower rises from one of the angles of a rectangular building, with a court-yard, surrounded by a piazza; the tower being twice the height of the rest of the fabric, consists of several stories, and is surmounted by a terrace fortified with battlements, on which is planted a spear with a weathercock of iron.

At the time of our story, the narrow road which led to it from the plain of the Giullari, was lined by two rows of cypresses, between which Liza and Fanfulla walked along, lighted by Michele, who preceded them with a lantern.

They arrived at the house, and the servant, ushering them into Troilo's sleeping-room, said:

"Madonna, the master, has ordered me to attend to all your wishes. I need not tell you — I who am with him day and night — I know well — even when he sleeps, you see, he has your name always in his mouth — even last night, I need not go farther back than that, I heard him. I think he was dreaming. He cried, "I must see my Liza, if I do not meet her soon, I shall surely die."

It is easy to imagine, how sweetly the words of this wretch fell on Liza's ear. Notwithstanding the length of the way, and the fatigue she had endured, it seemed to her at this moment that she felt no weariness, and with her child still sleeping on her shoulder, she continued to walk about the room, and observing the confusion which prevailed there, she said smilingly

to Fanfulla, "It is easy to see that there are no women here. Look ! poor fellow, his bed is not fit for a dog to sleep in !"

And saying these words, she gave the baby to Fanfulla, and busied herself in arranging the bed-clothes, turning over the sheet, and taking care that the counterpane hung evenly and symmetrically from every side, with that air of indisputable superiority, which is peculiar to women on such occasions. Having arranged the bed to her own liking, she turned her care to the rest of the room ; the furniture consisted of only a few chairs and a table, and these were loaded up with linen, wearing apparel, gloves and other things, of which a large quantity had fallen on the floor. Troilo's arms, polished and glittering, hung against the wall. On the table was a kind of small portmanteau half open. Liza, fortunately, never thought of touching this, or of examining its contents ; if she had, she might, perhaps, have found matter to shake her faith in the words just uttered by the servant.

Having put the room in order, and laid the baby on the bed, she said, looking to see how peacefully he slept :

"Oh ! see Fanfulla ! was not this the direct guidance of God ! Only last night he seemed just ready to die — and to-night, with all the cold and fatigue of the journey, one would think now that he had never been ill ! How long a time my heart has told me, that coming here would end all my troubles."

The sequel of the story will show how dangerous it is to trust to this blessed heart, which, however, very many, and women most of all, listen to as an infallible counsellor and prophet.

Troilo, meanwhile, parting with Valori, hurried home, and entering the room where he was so fondly expected, threw upon a chair his hat and cloak, and drawing a long breath, said joyously :

"At last I am with you, and here, thank God, I shall not have commissary, prince, or any other pest to trouble me — but from what I see, (and he gave a glance around,) I may readily perceive that I am no longer at the mercy of that good-for-nothing Michele, who keeps this room looking like a stable. My dear Liza, you are always the same, always kind, always my guardian angel !"

Then taking her hand, and looking steadily in her face, which, from the many exciting events of the night was flushed, and did not appear as hollow and haggard as it really was, he said :

"Bravo, my Liza ! You have been trying to impose upon me — is this the face so pale and so ugly ? You are a little excited, it is true, but you will soon be set to rights."

"Oh! my love," said Liza, completely overjoyed, "is it indeed true? Are we indeed re-united? It seems to me like a dream—sometimes I think I am delirious—if it should be a dream, woe is me when I awake!"

Then rising, and leading Troilo to the bed where their child was sleeping, she added:

"See our poor little Ariguccio! What a suffering face, and his little bones almost protruding through his skin! You expected he would be larger and handsomer, eh? It was as much as I could do to keep him alive; I had no milk for him! Oh! what days, what nights I have passed! I will tell you all, but not now; now I want to think only of the present—the past is past, and forever!"

Fanfulla, not to disturb these first moments of re-union, which he supposed were equally delightful to both, kept himself in the back-ground; but at length Michele brought in the supper, and then all three seated themselves, and cheerfully set to work on the repast.

Troilo, then turning to Liza's escort, who, from his bold visage, his manner of speaking, and his scars, was evidently a different man from what his dress denoted, said to him, "I have not even had time to return you those thanks which your great kindness to my Liza deserves."

"Oh! my Troilo," interrupted Liza, "he has done so much for me, that if I gave him my heart's blood, I could not compensate him."

"Well now, madonna," answered Fanfulla, "I can tell you, that, in all my life, old as I am, I never had greater pleasure than what I have felt this night in seeing you happy, and placed in safety with your husband. But what the deuce puts it into your head to talk about kindness and compensation? Such things don't suit me at all; they are only fit for courtiers—but the first time that you are in want of anything, you have only to say, 'Here, old fellow, I have need of you,' and that shall be my reward."

Troilo was about to answer, thinking, at the same time, that it would be a good opportunity to ask him who he was, for he had a great curiosity to know, when Michele entered the room, all out of breath, having run up stairs at full speed, and said:

"Messer Troilo, the Signor Commissary is here, he asked for you, and he is coming up."

The young man looked astonished, and writhing impatiently in his chair, he said:

"It is very provoking that I cannot enjoy myself in peace for

a moment — this is a great bore! Well, light him up and show him in." Then, turning to his guests, he said, "There always must be something to mar our pleasure — trials are never wanting. Go, both of you, into that little room, and be careful not to make a noise, for woe to us if you should be discovered — he would want to know who you were — and besides, if I am left alone with him, I can get rid of him the sooner."

Fanfulla and Liza rose in haste, took a light, and withdrew to an adjoining room.

In a few minutes, Baccio, Troilo, and Troilo, saluted him, saying aloud:

"What profitable business brings you here at this hour?" and at the same time with a sign of the hand and eye, notifying him that Liza was in the next room.

Baccio answered him by a significant look, and, seating himself, began to talk, taking care to raise his voice loud enough to be heard by Liza. In order that the principal thing that he wished the young woman to overhear, might seem to be dropped by him accidentally, and as if he was narrating an event of small importance, he told Troilo, that the Prince had sent him to intrust him with a responsibility of the greatest importance, and with regard to which, he must maintain the most implicit secrecy; that he was not to know more at present, but that he was to present himself the next morning in the little square of the Pian de Guillari, armed, and on horseback, and that he would then be sent on an expedition, in which he would find his advantage if it proved successful; then he addressed to him numberless compliments and flatteries, telling him how high he stood in the Prince's estimation, and that if he only knew how to maintain that good opinion, he would derive great honor and advantage from it.

Passing, then, from these to other subjects, his conversation apparently having no specific object, he said, as if suddenly recollecting himself, "Oh! by the way — you know that young fellow whom I saved last night from the scaffold, at your entreaty, and by so doing gave great offence. Well! after all, there is no remedy for him — and what did not take place last night, must take place to-morrow."

"Oh! how is that?" said Troilo.

"What do you think? the Prince has heard of it, I know not from whom — he says that these assassinations are not to be tolerated — especially when he learned that the man was the son of a Piagnone, of that Niccolò de' Lapi." (At these words a stifled cry was heard from the little room adjoining.) "That made him furious, and he gave orders for his execution to-

morrow, and when he has once declared his will — you know already, all is useless — and, in one respect, he is right; for if the insolence of this man goes unpunished, we shall always have to guard our lives against the attacks of these traitors — well, as the prison yonder, near the village is full, the young man was conducted to this tower, and shut up for the night in the vault here under the lower floor."

Troilo then, with the greatest mock-earnestness, implored Valerio to intercede for the youth, and find some means to save him.

"Listen to me," said Baccio dryly, "If you do not take care, your head will be set up on the walls yet. If you take my advice, you will not meddle with this business; for so much anxiety for the son of a Piagnone does not please me any too well. I wish you well, but I warn you to take care what you do, Troilo!"

So saying, he arose, and going out, descended the stairs accompanied by Troilo; when they were out of Liza's hearing, they burst into a laugh, and Baccio said:

"Did you hear that cry, when I said Niccolò de' Lapi? I hit the mark. Well now, here are a hundred gold crowns, and the letter; it will be well for you to be careful of it. In it, Count Permaria is requested to give his men orders to obey you in everything, and now prepare yourself for this enterprise, worthy of a knight of the Round Table, — and you can say to Niccolò, 'Here is your son, liberated by virtue of my powerful arm!' A better safe-conduct, you could not have, and you may thank me for it. Adieu."

Troilo, upon going up into his room, found Liza in the greatest agitation, and all in tears, she flung herself upon his neck, exclaiming:

"Oh! Troilo, what have I heard? Is one of my brothers lost? and is he to be put to death! Oh, tell me quick? who is it? and for what cause? is it not possible to save him? but which one is it, which of my brothers?"

"It is Bindo," answered Troilo, pretending to be also much surprised, "it is too surely Bindo — dear boy! it was all done for your sake, and therefore I pardon, and would gladly save him at any cost."

And here he struck his forehead with his hand, in a despairing style, then he told Liza the whole story, adding:

"I said nothing to you about it, because, in the first place, I had not time, and then, I considered him saved, and hoped to-morrow to send him free to Florence — but now what can be done? Oh! Heaven, what a horrible thing!" and he threw his hands into his hair in a frenzied manner.

"What can be done?" repeated Liza with desperation, "something must be done — some way must be found — there are so many — But don't you understand that Bindo cannot suffer this death? that it is not possible — it would be too horrible, on my own account — his blood would be upon my head, on yours, on that of this poor baby! But it is not true that there is no remedy — Oh! yes, Troilo, tell me, that there is — that you have found it! There are two of you here — I am here — I alone can do as much as three. Oh! but it is too much, that I must have on my soul the blood of this boy also! it is too much, it is too much!"

"Be quiet, Liza, in God's name," said Troilo, embracing her.

"Yes, pray be quiet," said Fanfulla, for with such a din we can effect very little — let us think, and, perhaps, I have found myself in a worse predicament before now — but you see, this screaming will do no good."

"I will not scream," answered the young woman, trembling violently, "no, see how still I am — I will obey you — but save my Bindo, — is it not true, that you have already found out the way? Oh! if you knew, a poor woman already weighed down with remorse — and now I shall have this murder also — Oh! speak to me! Have you no heart? no pity?"

Troilo had seated himself, with his face between his hands. He startled suddenly upon his feet, and taking Liza by the arm, said, resolutely:

"Yes, by the gods, there is a remedy — one alone, and it must be adopted. Liza! I sacrifice to you more than life! This night, within three hours, when all are sleeping, — and there remains but one man on guard at the principal door — I know where the man sleeps who has the key of the prison — With this dagger I will kill him — I will do the same with the other man — If the thing succeed, and it cannot fail, to-morrow we shall all be safe in Florence."

Liza could not speak, but she threw herself in his arm, embracing him, and lavishing her kisses upon him; when she became quieted, Troilo made her sit down beside him, and thus continued:

"For a long time, Liza, I have felt strongly impelled to leave this camp. My ancestors were all Paleschi, and I, also, was the same; I engaged in the war for the re-instating of the Medici, but without ever thinking that this bastard of a Pope was aiming at, (as is now evident enough,) the total ruin of our country. There is not now time to explain to you minutely, what have been my doubts and perplexities, agitated as I have been by conflicting sentiments, that of the love of party

on one hand, and the love of you, and of our city on the other. This only I can tell you, that I am resolved to fight *for* Florence, and not *against* her; and this present occasion I believe sent by God, to carry my determination into effect."

"Oh! say no more, my dear Troilo, for I cannot bear so much joy. What will my dear father say, when he learns your intention — Oh! God, this is too great a happiness — and this poor little one, driven away from his grandfather's house, without home or shelter! This is Thy work, great, blessed God! I have not deserved such mercies!"

"Now," said Fanfulla, "as everything is in the right way, do not let us throw away time in these ecstasies of delight, let us think of the essentials."

"Yes, yes," said Liza, and turning to Troilo, she said with a delighted air, "and if the question is, how we are to make our escape, this good man, whom you take to be a wandering vagrant by this ragged frock of his, tapping Fanfulla on the shoulder, this man, do you see, knows well how to assist you."

And here, drawing aside the loose frock which had served him for a disguise, she showed the glittering coat of mail in which he was encased. Troilo stared at him in astonishment, and Liza continued:

"Do you wish to know who he is? No less than Fanfulla da Lodi, one of the thirteen of Barletta, and the bravest of all."

Fanfulla interposed by saying, "You do me too much honor, madonna." "What do you say of him? Have I not had good company on my way here?" inquired Liza.

Troilo, who had always heard this man designated as one of the most daring among the soldiers of that time, and knew very well the history of the affair of Barletta, pretended to be delighted to know him, and to have him for an assistant, but he thought in his heart, "We shall have to use some discretion here." At first sight, not knowing who he was, but taking him for some Florentine shopkeeper, he had reckoned upon having him present at the pretended murder of the jailer, thinking, "He will be frightened, and keep in the background, and seeing me brandish my dagger, he will think that I have actually killed him; he will have greater faith in me than he, and so will those people in Florence, who shall hear him relate the story," but now, upon ascertaining who he was, he said to himself, "If I take him with me, he will tell true, even upon the guard at the gate, and cut him up like a piece of meat." So that, when Fanfulla, emboldened more than ever by Liza's

praises, and delighted to have something to do in his own line said :

“ Messer Troilo, although this is not exactly a praiseworthy deed, to take a man thus by surprise, yet, as the case is by no means an ordinary one, if you are willing, I will help you despatch one of these villains, and do the same by the other also.” Troilo thanked him, but said it would not be prudent for more than one to engage in this operation, that everything depended on their not being heard, and, therefore, he would take it upon himself, as he was well acquainted with the house, and they need not fear for the result.

It was now an hour past midnight, and they intended to make the attempt within three hours, calculating, that, before day-break, they should be at a sufficiently safe distance from the camp. Troilo, having to give the necessary orders, so that everything might be cleverly managed, persuaded Liza to throw herself on the bed, and repose for the short time that remained to her. The young woman, in pressing need of rest, consented ; when she had laid herself down, Troilo spread his mantle over her, and went out, promising to return as soon as possible : adding that she need not give herself any uneasiness if he were detained, as he would, without fail, come to awaken her at the appointed hour.

It is, indeed, fortunate for man, that he is denied all knowledge of the future. Were this knowledge granted us, those few moments of felicity, that we enjoy from time to time, and which aid us in supporting the trials of life, would be lost, or would be of rare occurrence. Poor Liza, who, after so much suffering, was now reposing with her baby on her husband's bed, that husband whom she had feared never again to see, or seeing him, to be spurned by him ; and was enjoying the unhopèd for felicity of finding him, not only loving and faithful, but resolved upon abandoning that party, by a connection with which, he would always have been an enemy to her father and to the city ; but could she have read the future, — could she have known the heart of that man, who was now to her the cause of so much happiness, she would have fled from that bed, as from a nest of vipers, and even this little refreshment, this brief pause would have been denied to the miserable woman, for whom so much sorrow was still in store.

On the contrary, ignorant of the future, and having passed through so many stormy agitations, she felt a calm arise in her soul, serene and trustful ; it seemed easy, reduced as the Florentines were, to re-acquire her father's favor, by means of the change in Troilo's politics, the merit of which she thought was

due to herself, and she hoped, therefore, to find even greater favor with Niccolò than ever before. Her heart promised her every future good, and she, poor creature, as usual, listened implicitly to its teachings. Abandoning herself to these dreams of felicity, she gradually sank to sleep, while Fanfulla, seated at the other end of the room, with his back towards her, had set himself to reciting psalms and prayers, in memory of the last injunctions of Fra Benedetto. To conquer the sleepiness that pressed heavily upon him, he kept himself erect, without leaning against his chair, embracing his knees with his clasped hands, pronouncing his words in a low tone indeed, but distinctly and quickly; then, by degrees, the motion of his lips became less rapid, his eyelids drooped, his head and whole body inclined forward, he lost his equilibrium entirely, but immediately recovering himself, he resumed his former position, the lips moved again, and in these alternations, he passed the time which Troilo was employing very differently.

The latter, upon leaving his room, went into that of the Count of S. Secondo, in the basement story, to whom, as a confidential person, and one from whom were not concealed the more important deliberations of the Pope and the Commissary, he told all that he was about to do, in order to give a better coloring to his going to Florence, asking him, at the same time, to aid him in his design.

The Count heard the whole, and found nothing in the plot that he wished to change, excepting one thing, and that was, that he had given Liza and her companion to understand that there were to be two men killed, when such was not the fact, at least for one of them, and he gave as a reason, that either by means of prisoners, or in some other way, it would easily be known at Florence that no one was killed, and that this would be likely to generate suspicions with regard to Troilo's sincerity, and the reason for which he had left the camp.

Troilo knew that this objection was not without foundation, and he stopped to consider, but could not possibly imagine how to remedy the difficulty. The Count relieved him from his perplexity, by telling him that among his men there was a great friend of Anguillotti da Pisa,* who had advised his escape, and the Count, knowing that this man had promised to avenge his friend, had given orders to his sergeant upon his first symptom of insubordination, to shoot him dead, to get rid of him, and he added, "Without

* An officer in the regiment of Conte Piermaria, who, on account of a dispute with the latter, fled to Florence. Being taken in battle, the Count cut his prisoner's throat with his own hand.

putting this man to too much inconvenience, I will have him to mount guard at the entrance of the prison, and by so doing, I shall merely hasten a little, what I have already promised him in my heart. A little sooner or later, will be all the same to him. Such being the case, though this is no affair of yours, you have an inducement for despatching this man, because I know that, thus managed, the affair will have a greater appearance of truth."

As for the jailer, whom the Count Piermaria was not willing to have killed, he sent for *him*, and in presence of Troilo informed him, that, in the course of the night, this gentleman would enter his room for the key; that if he should come alone, he should give it to him without delay; if, (providing for any contingency,) he should be accompanied by another person, Troilo was to feign to plant a dagger in his breast, and he was to fall without uttering a cry, as if wounded in a vital part.

Having thus arranged matters, Troilo, in taking leave, asked the Count:

"Can I serve you with anything in Florence? Now that I have become a silk-weaver, if you need any velvets, brocades, or stuffs, you will not forget me, hah? And I shall soon be able to tell you their price by the yard."

"Adieu, adieu, madcap. But if, in a couple of yards of any stuff you please, you will send me the head of Anguillotti, whoever will bring it to me, shall have drink-money enough to drown all his sorrows; tell him, therefore, if he is not tired of his bread, to keep out of my hands."

Troilo went out and entered the stable where his horse was, put on his saddle and bridle, and muffled his hoofs, so that when he took him out, he should not be heard on the pavement, and having now prepared everything, he went up into his room and found Liza and Fanfulla both asleep. He seated himself silently, and remained so about half an hour, and then thinking the moment had arrived, he waked them both, saying:

"It is time, we must get ready."

Liza was soon on her feet: she took her child in her arms, taking that precaution best known to mothers, to prevent him from crying, if he should wake.

Troilo armed himself, assisted by Fanfulla; he then took a lantern in his hand, which he covered with his cloak, and then all three descended the stairs on tiptoe. When they reached the landing, under the piazza of the court-yard, Troilo said:

"Wait here till I go for the key."

Fanfulla seemed bent on going to assist him, saying, in an

under-tone, "Just let me put two fingers on his collar, and I tell you, I will silence him directly;" from which remark, Troilo was more than ever convinced, how important it was that he should go alone, and with great difficulty, he succeeded in liberating himself from his too zealous companion, saying to him:

"No, no, stay here, or, if you wish to assist me, as soon as you see me return, while I am getting the young man out of the prison, spring you upon the guard, and let the first blow be the last."

He set off without awaiting his reply, and in a few moments re-appeared, holding up the key. Fanfulla now crept towards the great door of entrance, keeping close to the wall, like a tiger about to spring upon his prey, holding in his hand a naked short-sword, with a broad, heavy, glittering blade; he soon found himself within three paces of the soldier on guard, who, resting his arms on the muzzle of his arquebus, nodded his head drowsily from time to time, thus exposing a hand's-breadth of the nape of the neck.

As soon as Fanfulla saw Troilo re-appear, he rushed forward, and with one sweep of his sword, the head of the soldier fell on one side, and the body the other. Fanfulla wiped his sword on the grass, replaced it in the sheath, and, raising to his shoulder, the arquebus of the dead man, went forward with Liza, to a dark sheltered spot under the cypresses, to await the others. Troilo, in the meantime, descended into the dungeon, and finding Bindo asleep, waked him, and told him to follow him. The boy, who thought he had come to kill him, on learning that it was otherwise, set forth joyously, and was soon at the side of his sister, whom with the greatest astonishment he recognized and embraced, and Liza, cautioning him not to raise his voice, gave him to understand, in brief but comprehensive words, what had happened, and told him of the resolution taken by Troilo: both manifesting as much joy as the time and place would allow. Troilo then appeared, leading his horse, and silently filing off, they all took the road to Baroncelli, from whence they intended passing beyond Bellosguardo, to come out on the Pisa road, and crossing the Arno by the Ponte a Signa, to reach Florence by the Porta al Prato.

For the rest of the way, there was no other danger than that of meeting straggling scouts, for whom, if they were Imperialists, Troilo had the pass-word, and if Florentines, Fanfulla could make himself known to them, so that they were now safe from all untoward accident, and, therefore, joyous and contented with their success, they stopped a moment to allow Liza

irono appear greater in the eyes of Piagnoni party.

The youth, full of gratitude towards him, extolled him enough; and he said that of such a service, and for having country, but on the contrary, coming would take him into favor, and thus put to all these vexations.

Troilo, who guessed the subject of his conversation, considered it extremely useful in favor of his cause, and kept behind her ample opportunity, and kept behind with long arguments, he professed to be cause most unwillingly, drawn by a example of his ancestors, but, that resolved to be a loyal Florentine; and considerable eloquence, and the other from all suspicion, he succeeded in gaining completely, so much so, that before he could boast of having with him rendered testimony to his valor, his heroism, his political conversion.

Entering the city by the Porta al F the extremity of the Borgo Ognissanti Bindo, taking his way through Parione along the Arno.

Troilo, on arriving at the gate of the city, so as not to be recognized before he had ban of rebel under which he had been

By having reached the door of the convent, Fanfulla said, as he knocked :

"The best plan will be to go to Fra Benedetto, he is the kindest of the whole fraternity, and, without doubt, he will take this business to his heart. When he *can* do a favor, he always does it gladly : which cannot be said of all these monks : and many of them keep fresh in their minds the night of the attack on the convent, and for them a Palleseco and the devil, is one and the same thing."

By this time, the porter had opened the door, and, recognizing his old friend and companion, he said, holding up his hands in astonishment :

"Welcome, Fra Bombardo ! You have been so long gone, that we almost began to doubt —"

"Here I am, alive and well, God be thanked !" said Fanfulla, "and I do not come alone — I want to speak with Fra Benedetto — see there, I have made a convert."

The porter looked at Troilo, who, all encased in armor, scarcely showed anything but his eyes, and said, as they entered :

"A convert of your own sort, if I mistake not. However, as the wind sits now, there is more need of the cuirass, than of the monk's habit."

Going up stairs, they found the good old man in his cell, seated, as usual, in his great chair, with his St. Augustine open before him, and his spectacles on his nose, looking so exactly as Fanfulla had left him the last time they talked together, that one would have imagined he had never stirred from the spot.

Upon entering, and seeing the monk, Fanfulla could not help thinking in his heart, "I would ask if this can be called living ? It is the life of a mushroom !"

Kissing then the hand of his superior, who received him very kindly, rising a little to embrace him, he presented Troilo, telling him who he was, narrating all the different adventures which had brought him thither : the liberation of Bindo, Troilo's determination to attach himself to the Piagnoni party, and his reunion with Liza, to which nothing was now wanting, but the ascent of Niccolo.

"He surely will not," continued Fanfulla, "spurn the man who has saved the life of his son. But in case it should be necessary, we have come to ask a slight favor of you. If you would only speak to him, he *could* not say no to you."

Troilo then, taking off his helmet, and assuming a face expressive of the most profound humility and contrition, began to speak with so much passion and apparent truthfulness, of his

gentleman, then, in your care ; you
able refreshment, and, trust me, I w
tidings."

"That good Niccolò," he cont
heaven, "is indeed a truly hones
times, it cannot be denied — but
greatest friend of this convent. I
more at peace, it is time ! he has
yes, we will hope for the best ; now
this, for the honor of the world, he c
we do."

He left the convent, and quickenin
age would allow, was soon at the doc
no one in the house but Laudomia, her
who had arrived but a few momen
account, not having seen or heard fro
they had felt the greatest apprehensio
father immediately upon his arrival,
disturbed air and with harsh words, b
the joy he felt of seeing before him,
alone of all his sons, could make h
habitual sternness, and for whom, exp
to so many perils, he trembled more t

This lad, by that intuitive per
times have of the thoughts and
had less fear than any of the others, of
frown of Niccolò, and, knowing excell
in the hour of storm.

But I, proof against such shocks, could not help flinging his arms around the neck of his son, and a red flush tinged for a few moments the habitual palor of his cheeks.

Impatiently he demanded, who had liberated him. When he heard the name of Baccio Valori, his face darkened, and he said within himself, "My God, Thy will be done!" for he had need of great resignation to the Divine Will to enable him to support the idea of owing such an obligation to that traitor; and then Bindo went on to relate his imprisonment, and the inevitable death to which he was destined. "But," he added, "by whom was I saved? By Troilo."

At these words, at this fresh disgrace, Niccolò could no longer contain himself.

"Troilo, do you say? Troilo has saved your life? My God! my God! what have I done, that all this shame must be heaped upon my head? And you, coward! did you not rather choose death a thousand times? Do you not know that all must die? that sooner or later death comes to every one, but that infamy may be avoided; and that it is infamy to accept life from one who has betrayed his country, from one who has dishonored that blood which flows in your veins, from one who has trodden these gray hairs in the dust; and who, by his conduct, has said to you, to your brothers, to all of us, that we are a pack of dastards; and this shame they have written on our foreheads, on the walls of this house, on that shield upon your arm, which I gave you spotless and honored? Do you not know all this? and then, do you return alive into my presence?"

CHAPTER XIX.

To these rigorous words, uttered without pausing for breath, with agitated voice and flashing eyes, Bindo strove uselessly to oppose a single syllable.

To be called a coward, by him alone, to whom he could not respond with his sword, was too bitter and insupportable; for, boy as he was, his nature was no less terrible than his father's, so raising his eyes boldly, he said:

"To this *traitor*, as you call him, this man who has so outraged us, I went, without other companion than my sword, in the midst of enemies, resolved to dispatch him. I may have erred, in not asking permission to do so, but this was not the act of a coward, I believe. When he came to take me out of prison, I was sleeping — suddenly awakened, I did not even recognize him. I went out, found Liza, and learned from her, that Troilo, now repentant, was preparing to come with us, to fight henceforward for the liberties of Florence.

"Troilo in Florence!" said Niccolò, in the greatest astonishment.

"He returned with us, has acknowledged his offence, and has no other wish than to wipe off the stigma of traitor, and obtain your favor.

"My favor!" interrupted Niccolò, with a bitter smile. He remained thoughtful for a moment, and then continued:

"Let him cancel his past villanies, return to his duty, place his life at the service of his country, and then he will have the favor of God, which is far more to be desired than mine."

"And yours, likewise," said Fra Benedetto, who, just entering, had heard these last words, and who, seeing Bindo, and observing the agitated faces of father and son, readily guessed to whom they referred.

Courteously received by Niccolò, he seated himself, and continued, "I come to rejoice with you over two things; one, that a wicked, rebellious child of this city has returned repentant and eager to aid in her succor; the other, that God has opened a way to remove from you every scandal, and to show

that you should live with such extreme rigidity, not so much for the offences committed against you, as against the country, in giving his hand to one who was its enemy. Messer Niccolò, I come, by virtue of my office, to bring you words of peace, and to ask of you, pardon for Troilo and your daughter. Their submission will serve to repair the injuries they have done you; Troilo can thus amend those, which he has done to his country, and, if he did you wrong at first, he has now made ample amends for it, by saving Bindo from death. God, just and terrible, accepts him, who heartily repents; he rejoices more over one converted sinner, than over ninety and nine just men. Messer Niccolò, would you correct, would you oppose his decisions? will you show yourself more implacable than Eternal Justice itself?"

The thoughtful old man answered nothing, but with his hand on his beard, his eyes fixed on the ground, and with frowning brow, he was considering whether he could trust himself to make so great a concession, as to permit a man who had been his greatest enemy, to come into his presence. The thing appeared to him so preposterous, and it had come upon him so unexpectedly, that it was no more than natural, that he should require some time to accustom himself to the idea of it.

Had he listened only to his own heart, he would have answered the friar with a downright refusal, but, even had he harbored such a thought for a moment, his good judgment would have quickly persuaded him that Troilo, restored to his country, and become a loyal citizen, — Troilo, to whom he was indebted for the life of his son, — could no longer be treated as Troilo, the Pallesco, and that, sooner or later, since he was at any rate the husband of Liza, he should be obliged to pardon him and receive him into favor.

Upon learning, then, how things had gone, and that the guard was actually killed, he thought it unreasonable to doubt his sincerity, and the old man, being by nature unused to all tergiversation, said at last:

"He who is a friend to the republic, and combats for its liberty, can never be an enemy to Niccolò de' Lapi. To the injury that he has done to me, is now opposed a great obligation. In view, then, of the public calamity, let all private hates be silenced, which would keep souls divided at a time when it is all important, that they should remain united. Fra Benedetto, you have known Niccolò for fifty years, you know my feelings, and how much I have cared for the honor of this poor house! I never could have imagined, that what has happened to me, could have come upon me! God knows if I have merited

this punishment, Now, that He wills the sacrifice to be consummated, may His will be done!" For a moment he seemed overwhelmed by his feelings, then he added:

"I pardon Troilo and Liza."

"Messer Niccolò," said the Frate, laying his hand upon his arm, "God will remember these words of yours, and I, who know you, as you say, know how much they cost you, and therefore their exceeding value."

So saying, he arose to return to S. Marco, impatient to bear the good news to Troilo, but Niccolò detained him.

On the point of offering up as a sacrifice to his country, a hate so deeply rooted and so bitter; on the point of receiving as a son one of that party, which had always contested with him the desire most dear to his heart, that of seeing Florence free and happy, and this in modes sometimes crafty, sometimes violent, and always wickedly, he felt the necessity of giving a last vent to his feelings, and to pour into a friendly breast, the sorrows with which his heart was overflowing.

He made Fra Benedetto seat himself again, and then said, sorrowfully shaking his head, while from time to time, his eyes flashed so terribly, as to fill the meek friar with terror:

"Yes, I pardon them! I have said it, and that is enough, but it costs me, I deny it not, it costs me dear! Think, Fra Benedetto, there has never been misfortune, there has never been danger, or ruin, that has fallen upon this city, and upon my house, from the time of the return of Cosimo in 1434, until now, that has not proceeded from these perfidious Pallesechi. For them, the bones of Messer Cione, my father, lie in a foreign land! For them, we became the prey of King Charles in '92! For them, this people, formerly so religious and so well-ordered, corrupted by the worst example, is now reduced to such a state that Florence has become a brothel! By them, was sacked and burned the Prato in '12. By these shameful, infamous villains, was slain that most admirable and holy Fra Girolamo, and now, not content with laying violent and bloody hands on their miserable country, they call in the aid of barbarians even, to aid them to consummate her destruction, and this ribald Pope, blesses the swords destined to pierce the hearts of his fellow-citizens, and desolate the land that gave him birth! I ought to say no more of this Troilo, because I have resolved to pardon him; but with you, Fra Benedetto, we have been friends for fifty years; and to you I must say, for the last time, that young man has given me, my *death-blow*."

He was silent a moment, then, with a sigh, he said resolutely, "Well, this evening you will conduct them both hither; I wish

"I wish to leave, my sons, and Lamberto, whom I regard as a son also. I know that the houses of the Ardinghelli have been plundered, and partly demolished; I wish to show them that I do not do things by halves. Let them come and live with me, until he chooses to go elsewhere, for this house is now too large for so small a family."

Fra Benedetto, delighted with the favorable termination of this affair, after having greatly commended the magnanimous proposal of Niccolò, took leave, and returning to S. Marco, he informed Troilo, that this very evening, he was to be conducted to the house of his father-in-law, who, from that moment, would accept him for a son, and forget all the past. It is unnecessary to say, that the young man pretended to be highly pleased, and extremely grateful to the good Frate, for his friendly offices. The revocation of the ban of rebel, was yet to be obtained from the magistrates. Fra Benedetto wrote a letter to Alessandro d'Antonio, one of the five syndics for rebels, and Fanfulla took upon himself the responsibility of carrying it, and it was not long before he re-appeared with a favorable answer, by which Troilo, restored to the privileges of citizenship, could go out safely to rejoin Liza, who was waiting for him in the greatest suspense, and who was ready to die with joy, upon learning how happily their trials were all to end at last. After rejoicing together for a little while, Troilo went out, saying, that having only his armor, and no citizen's dress, he would go and procure suitable clothing to present hims. If, during that evening, and taking his way towards Calimala, he should, as he went along, to contrive some way by which he might, without suspicion, meet Benedetto de' Nobili, give him Baccio's letter, and confer with him upon the interests of the Pallescan party. Messer Benedetto lived, at that time, in one of the streets that lead from Calimala to the Corso of the Adornati. Passing before his door, Troilo found it closed, and no one was to be seen at the windows. He went on about his business, and, in a tailor's shop, a few paces off, he found clothing such as was, at that time, worn by the soldiers, a cloak of the Spanish fashion, that is, with a hood behind, breeches that reached the knee, with cusses trimmed with velvet, and a cap for the head. He chose grave colors, saying, within hims. If, "His zazzione" or a Niccolò, will find me the more to his liking, dressed thus." He put on the new garments, and, tying his arms together, could

* The old men of 1529 were called in derision *zazzione*, from the *zazzione*, or long hair, which they wore, according to the ancient custom of Florence; while the young men, following the modern fashion, had their hair cut short, but left the beard to grow.

he would have them sent to his house. While he was arranging his armor, he went on talking with the tailor, hoping to discover some means of finding Messer Benedetto, for he was no more willing to make direct inquiries about him, than to visit him openly; so, after long manœuvring, he invented a story, that he had come from Bologna, on account of a lawsuit that he had with certain merchants, and that he was in search of a doctor of laws for counsel; and, finally, he begged the tailor, if he knew of a worthy man of that profession, to tell him where he could find him. The man, as Troilo expected, mentioned Messer Benedetto among the first, and said if he did not find him at home, he would be sure to meet him at the printing-office of the Giunta,* opposite the entrance to Badia, at the inn of the Porco, or in the shop of Benvenuto, the goldsmith, in the New Market. To the last mentioned place, Troilo bent his steps, and found at the door, many youths and overgrown men, all belonging to the trained bands of the different quarters of the city, who frequented that place every day, amusing themselves with watching Cellini at his work, and talking with him, for he also had taken arms under the banner of the republic, and he talked so largely, that one would have thought that he alone could swallow up the whole Imperial army.

When Troilo arrived there, there was a great whispering going on, because Benvenuto had left, unknown to every one, and the rumor ran, that he had returned to Rome. Some said he ought to be overtaken; others hoped his property would be given up to plunder; some cried, "He ought to be hanged," but the most of them agreed that he ought to be banished. This tumult was quite favorable for Troilo's designs; he saw Messer Benedetto among the throng, and could approach him without attracting the attention of any one. Coming close to Nobili, he said, looking up at the sky, "It will rain to-morrow." (It had been agreed between Valori and Messer Benedetto, that this phrase should be used as a means of recognizing those who should be sent by Valori, and to whom Benedetto might safely trust himself.) Benedetto started at these words, and it occurred to him that it must be Troilo, whom he had been expecting for several days: looking attentively at him, he thought he recognized him, though he had not met him for several years, and then had only known him by sight.

He drew Troilo a little apart, and satisfying himself that it was he, he said:

"It will not do for us to associate together, but, in order

* The Giunta commenced printing in 1494, and continued it till 1555.

"And so they safely talk together. I will have your name mentioned among the brethren of the *bucca** of Girolamo: I go there every Sunday and every holiday-eve. To recognize each other, as every one there has the capuche drawn over his face, I will make the sign of the cross with the bare hand, and then will put on my glove, coughing three times; you will approach me, saying, 'It is cold.' Now go away, and whenever you meet me in a public place, pretend not to know me."

Troilo gave him the letter from Baccio, and, without further remark, they separated. Messer Benedetto, who longed to learn the contents of the letter, ran home, and shutting himself up in his office on the lower floor, he opened it, and found, that in the first place, he was directed to keep his eye upon Troilo, who, from his volatile and pliant character was in some danger, by coming under Niccolo's influence, of being turned from their purposes; then, a course was marked out for him in conjunction with Troilo, for the general advantage of the party, and the letter ended in the following words, "And when the city shall be in our hands, as sooner or later it will be, without any doubt, I shall leave it to you, to see that Niccolo does not escape; I say no more, for I know to whom I recommend him."

"Never fear," said Nobili, throwing the letter into the fire, and watching it till it was all reduced to ashes.

The hatred which he had for Niccolo, had its birth many years previous to this time: holding some office under government, rumor said he had not kept his hands unsullied. Niccolo, to whom it was known, that this rumor was not without foundation, hearing him in company, launching out into the most violent abuse against a citizen who had fallen under the same suspicions, reproved him, saying, "In order to safely accuse others, one should be pure himself." Nobili, conscious of his delinquency, was silent, but he laid it up against Niccolo, and from this time, he managed, accomplished dissimulator as he was, to become ostensibly reconciled to Niccolo, and then, to persuade him to lend him several thousand crowns, with which he could settle up his business, and stop the mouths of his creditors. To show his gratitude, as is customary with knaves

* Varchi says, that in 1520, there were in Florence seventy-five societies of scholars, who met together for religious purposes; they were of different kinds, and under different names. Four of them, namely, the *Compagnia della Sapienza*, and meeting only by night, were called *Religiosi*. The *Compagnia della Sapienza* had its beginning on Monte Feltro, six years before the birth of Antonio de' Medici, where Antonio de' Medici was the founder of the *Compagnia della Sapienza*. For the convenience of its frequenters, it was removed to Florence under the Hospital S. Matteo.

like him, he now sought the ruin of Niccolò, not merely to rob him of the money he had borrowed of him, but with the hope also of obtaining, by the triumph of the Pallescan party, a part, and perhaps the whole, of his property, because, the siege being ended, they would bargain among themselves for the property of the exiled and dead, each one reserving for himself that of his own private enemies, in the same way that Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus, settled matters at their meeting in the island of Reno.

Troilo, in the meantime, had returned to Liza, to await the hour of repairing to S. Marco, in order to summon Fra Benedetto to accompany him and his party to the house of the Lapi, whither Fanfulla also was to go, by request of the Superior, that, if necessary, he might also add his testimony, with regard to the Torre del Gallo.

When Liza saw him appear, dressed in a manner that gave grace and elegance to his figure, and, at the same time, had a composed, unaffected air, she exclaimed, "Oh! how well you look, my dear Troilo!" then guessing his intention in the selection of colors, she added:

"When I saw you go away, it occurred to me, that I ought to have warned you against wearing too much finery, as soldiers are apt to do, for that would displease my father. I ought to have known, foolish child that I was, that my Troilo needed no such impertinent interference, and that he knew much better than I what was proper — turn round — there, so — Oh! who is there in Florence so handsome as you?"

Troilo, who was quite as well persuaded of this as Liza, imprinted a kiss upon her lips, in which, had she not been so blinded by passion, she might have perceived less tenderness than self-complaisance; but the hour was not yet come in which she was to know him.

"Now listen to me," continued Liza, as, seating herself on his knee, and putting one arm around his neck, she stroked with the other, now his beard, now his hair, now the folds of his dress: "Listen to me, my love, I wish to forewarn you, — you will say, hear her saucy advice! — I know you do not need my counsel — but you also know the proverb, 'a fool knows more about his own house, than a wise man does of that of another,' — and I know papa — you see — at first he strikes one with fear — ah! you laugh! not *you* I know — but still I would not wish that *you* should meet his glance without being prepared for it — and then — you must see yourself that he has had cause to be angry with us — and if he *should* say something a little — a little — I know not what — but you *will* be good for

ove of your Liza, will you not? Think how much she has
 red, poor thing — and I have suffered willingly. I am
 ent now, and I would suffer doubly, if it be with you, if
 do not take you from me. This, then, I wished to say,
 you will not take it amiss, will you? and with papa, what-
 he may say, you will bear with him — and —”

“Hush, Liza, you wrong me — do you think I have reached
 a pass, without having foreseen everything? without hav-
 armed myself to bear everything from Niccolò, even to
 use?”

“Oh! may you be blessed! you have taken a great weight
 om my heart — and I dared not tell you all this! — Oh!
 ose who see your beauty, know not how good you are!”

So saying, she flung herself upon his neck, without another
 word, and remained thus for some minutes. Then rising, and
 drying her eyes, she said:

“Now I must think of poor Ariguccio — I should like to
 have him decently dressed — poor innocent! he has only those
 few clothes which he has so outgrown, however, I will try —”

Then, taking her child on her knee, she smoothed its hair and
 arranged its clothes, and, while thus engaged, she heard the clock
 of the Palazzo strike twenty-two and a half.* At twenty-three,
 they were to set off, — the near approach of this hour, at first
 scarcely felt, now filled her heart with an indelible
 terror, so that her pulses beat with feverish rapidity; a thou-
 sand doubts, a thousand fears, crowded upon her imagination;
 then she turned her heart to God with brief but fervid prayers,
 then she kissed her child, now turned her eye to Troilo, seeking
 to cheer him, giving him, a little strength, a little courage, hoping
 to catch one look of his to comfort her, but he was seated with
 his forehead resting on the window-sill, his face was fixedly turned
 towards the street. God knows what was passing in his mind
 at that hour. Poor Liza would have welcomed one glance at
 that moment, as a gift from heaven, but it was denied her, and
 the clock struck twenty-three!

She felt for a moment her knees sink under her, but the
 blood of Niccolò coursed in her veins, and, therefore, this weak-
 ness was but momentary. Taking her baby in her arms, she
 closed shut her eyes, praying God to aid her, then moved cour-
 ageously on with Troilo, and together they set off for St. Marco,
 without uttering a word all the way, and finding at the convent
 door, Fra Benedetto and Fantilla, who were waiting for them,

* As at an hour and a half before sunset. The Italians at this period,
 reckoned their time from sunset to sunset, counting twenty-four hours in-
 stead of twelve. They now reckon time as we do.

the whole company resumed their way, and not long after, knocked at the hall-door of the Lapi.

Niccolò, meantime, had notified his sons to be at home at this hour, and had requested Laudomia to prepare a chamber for her sister and brother-in-law, where the baby also could be accommodated. When she had made all necessary preparation, she went down stairs and found Niccolò seated in his great chair, and his sons, Averardo, Vieri and Bindo standing around, all armed. Lamberto also was there, and Niccolò was saying to him, "I know, my son, how hard it must seem to you, to see this man in my house. What can I say to you? He is the husband of Liza? He is come to fight *with* us! He has also saved Bindo from death! Could I refuse him my pardon? Could you refuse to pardon him? I wished you to be present at this time, because I knew you to be stout of heart; and, as you must, sooner or later, meet for the first time, I thought, perhaps, the trial would be less severe to have the meeting take place here in our presence."

"My father," answered Lamberto, "whatever course you may see fit to take, with regard to me, now and for the future, there is no need that you justify yourself with me. It is enough for me, that you are willing to regard me as a son, and, for the rest, I will so act as to show myself greater than my fortunes."

"You speak like a man, Lamberto!" then shaking his head, he added, "Ah! Liza, Liza, you were indeed a silly maiden!"

Averardo, a rough, fierce character, of few words, and, with no other thought than for the things of war, said petulantly:

"And for the follies of women, we are expected to make amends. That is why I never took a wife — I hope now, that these married folks will not delay us too long — I will not wait long, by the Cross! There is a great stir in the camp; I should not like to have the fight begin, and I not there!"

Vieri, who was the very opposite of his brother in everything, was one of those men who are so fortunate as to be always happy, even in misfortunes and adversity, so much so, that he did not seem to belong to the Lapi, said laughing:

"Ah! never fear, if we should miss a few shots, there will be no lack of them, for all that — there is abundance of such kind of ware, thank God — so may there be of partridges and roasted livers, and good wine. I saw from the wall, that the government has made of the vines on the hill over against Arcetri, that there is not as much left, as I can hold on the palm of my hand. If it is so everywhere, we shall have to drink another sort of wine."

No more to be answered, and Averardo, without deigning to stare, said, half vexed :

" You are a happy man : nothing ever troubles you."

" No, it is not so. You know I mean to wait till I am on my *bier*, to show a sullen face, for now it would profit no one. Courage ! be of good cheer, it may turn out better than you think. And you, Lamberto, you have reason to rejoice that you have had such an escape. Liza is my sister, but no matter, you would have had a little fool for a wife, and there are plenty more of them in Florence. It will always be time enough for that."

While this talk went on, the serving woman, Mona Fede, appeared, and spreading a linen cloth on the table, she placed upon it a wine-cooler, containing two flagons of wine ; then came Maurice, Lamberto's servant, whom he had drawn out of the *Adda*, bearing drinking-cups and a dish of sweetmeats, for, at this time in Italy every reconciliation was sealed by a general libation, as is still the case at this day in some of the southern provinces, where there are frequently bloody affrays among the peasants ; and we remember to have been present at one of these pacifications, where two persons, who the day before were trying to kill each other, were brought together crippled, and with their wounds bandaged up, to drink each other's healths ; and we were told that after that, there was no question that they mutually forgave, and were forgiven.

After the brief dialogue we have just narrated, all became silent, for, in those moments when the heart is full to overflowing, words are few. Only Mona Fede whispered softly to her assistant as they were making their preparations, giving from time to time a glance at her masters, for she was dying to say something about Liza's return, and to show the joy she felt on the occasion. But seeing them all look out of humor, just when, according to her notions, they ought to be delighted, and have peasant faces, she felt out of patience, but she soon quieted herself with the usual comment, which she used to apply to everything beyond her comprehension, and especially where they related to lords and great folks, saying to herself, " Well, they have their whims — it is useless to say anything — we must let them alone ! " Maurice, on the contrary, under that appearance of phlegm and indifference which marks the northerner, was inwardly vexed, to be obliged to do honor to one, who had so, shamefully wronged his master, for whom he felt that exclusive affection, divested of every thought of self-interest, which, to the shame of humanity, has its most perfect type in the dog. And when Mona Fede said delightedly to him :

"See, Maurice, there are few such flagons as these in Florence! I have placed them — it seems as if my heart told me so — for those who are used to such things," he answered, shaking his head.

"This Messer Droile of yours, deserves a gun-shot, rather than fine drinking-cups."

Just then a knock was heard, and all started.

Fede ran to open the door, and Laudomia rushed after her not so much, the sooner to embrace her sister, as to prevent her from coming alone into the presence of her father. Bindo also hastened to meet Troilo, to introduce him to his father. The door was no sooner opened, than the two sisters met in a close embrace; they remained thus, without uttering a word, for a short time, and then, disengaging themselves, Liza took her child in her arms, which, until then, had been carried by her husband, and advanced with Laudomia, who, with one hand, held her by the arm, while the other encircled her waist. Fra Benedetto took the lead, after him came Troilo with Bindo, and Fanfulla brought up the rear. Niccolò prepared himself to receive them, standing beside his chair, with one hand on its arm, and the other hanging by his side. He stood with expanded chest, shoulders thrown back, and his eye serious, not cheerful, but at least serene. Beside him stood Averardo, dark and austere of visage, his left hand on his sword-hilt, and his right thrown behind him; on the other side, Lamberto, who, if he ever thanked God for having given him a strong spirit, certainly did so at this moment. Even Vieri had assumed a serious air, suitable to the occasion. Fra Benedetto had no sooner reached the threshold, than he began to say, as he came forward, followed by the others:

"Messer Niccolò, here is your daughter, here is Messer Troilo; they feel that they have need of your pardon, and they have come to implore it; ready now and henceforth to do your pleasure; they hope you will receive them into your favor, and count them as loving and obedient children."

While the Frate was speaking, Liza, trembling from head to foot, supported by Laudomia, had approached her father, and at length fell on her knees at his feet, without daring to raise her eyes, her face partly concealed by that of the child, who, at the sight of so many strangers, clung with his tiny hands to his mother. Even Troilo had placed a bended knee on the ground, a few steps behind Liza. In preparing his mind for this scene, he had *resolved* not to descend to such an act of humiliation. What! kneel to a silk-weaver! He would have thought any one a fool who should suggest such a thing. But,

On entering the room, the tall, majestic figure of the old republican, the air of imposing authority on his brow, and in his whole person, the intrepidity and intelligence which gleamed from his eye, had so impressed him, had, in fact, so conquered him, that his arrogance fell from him at once, and, finding himself so little, so low, so contemptible, when confronted with this man, he was, almost without knowing how, prostrated by an unknown, invincible power, at his feet. He felt, at this moment, that he lacked the hardihood to carry into effect his villainous treachery; it seemed to him that the first glance of the old man must penetrate to the depths of his heart; that he must at once read there the wicked secret, and he was almost ready to embrace his knees, confess everything, and implore his pardon. But to conduct him to this point, the impression produced by the powerful presence of Niccolò was not sufficient; he needed, beside, one of those virtuous impulses, which sometimes arrest the wretch on the verge of the precipice, and of this the soul of Troilo was not capable. For, at this moment, he remembered Baccio Valori, and his friends in the camp; he seemed to see before him faces that mocked him, and laughed at his want of spirit; and then he confirmed himself anew in his first intentions, and aware that, if he did not act his part perfectly on this occasion, it might give rise to suspicions of his sincerity, and be followed by the ruin of his whole undertaking, he composed his face and manner, and prepared himself to speak in such a way, that the deception should be complete.

As for Niccolò, at the sight of Troilo his agitation became more acute, but stifling the emotions of his heart, he fixed his eyes steadily upon Troilo's face, as if desirous to satisfy himself of the external appearance of one, who had wrought him so much trouble. "He is handsome, it cannot be denied," he said, within himself; then, immediately, "but how could Liza have fallen in love with this man!" For if he pleased the eye of Niccolò, he was rejected by his heart. But Niccolò lent no ear to this private judgment, supposing it the effect of the hatred he had now borne to him, and he no sooner saw him bend the knee than he said:

"Rise, Messer Troilo; rise, Liza, and listen to me." When they had both regained their feet, Niccolò continued, "I have opened the door of my house to you, it is not my intention of upbraiding you, or reproaching you with what has passed. As for what relates to me, and the injury done to me, I am content to pardon you freely, and I beg of you to cancel all and everything, as I hope God may

cancel all my sins. But I wish you to know, Messer Troilo, — and I say it to your face, for I never wish to have the subject again alluded to, — I wish you to know, that, if you have not changed, if, instead of coming here to defend the liberties of the state of Florence, as so many have assured me, you purpose to —”

“They have told you the truth, Messer Niccolò,” interrupted Troilo. “I have no other desire.”

“And so I wish to believe. But let me finish what I have to say. If, on the other hand, you *should* remain with the enemies of your country, hold it for certain, that Niccolò de’ Lapi, before he would accept you for a son-in-law, would suffer himself to be hewn in pieces. But now, if Florence *has* gained one good soldier more, one more defender, I not only accept you as a son, but I bless God for all my trials, in that they have resulted at last, to the advantage of our city. Henceforth, I make no difference between you and my other sons, but it is right that you should know, that I have sworn to them, and I swear the same to you, by those ashes that you see in yonder niche, (here he pointed them out with uplifted arm and outstretched finger,) and which were gathered up while yet warm, from that funeral pile, from whence the sainted spirit of Fra Girolamo ascended into paradise, I swear to you, that, if ever, through your evil destiny, it shall happen that you fail, in any respect whatsoever, of your duty as a loyal citizen, that you shall be overtaken, either by my sword, or by the vengeance of that God, who hears and always confirms the malediction of a father.” Troilo, who at these words, felt a cold chill creep through his veins, like the culprit, who, put to the rack, exerts himself to appear sincere, and avoid saying a word which shall betray him, answered boldly, and with as much vehemence as possible :

“And I, Messer Niccolò, on the condition of being in future considered as a son, accept upon my head the oath you have just sworn ; and with the aid of God, and of the blessed Fra Girolamo, whom I henceforth take as my patron and protector, I am confident that no future evil will come upon me.”

“And so I believe, also,” responded Niccolò ; then, he added, indicating, one after another, his sons, “This is Averardo, this is Vicri, Bindo, and this is Lamberto.”

At this name, Troilo started, for he knew all that had passed between Lamberto and Liza ; she, herself, cast down her eyes and turned pale.

Niccolò remained a moment, as if reflecting, then observing Lamberto, who stood motionless, and whose countenance grew dark, he added :

"*Niccolò*, *Niccolò* has pardoned! Now, my sons, hear me! It is I who speak!" and in uttering these words, his face became inflamed, and his voice terrible). "The question is of Florence! The question is of our country, and not of ourselves! Let us think of her wrongs, and not of ours! When her final ruin is impending, can we have other thought than of her danger? Union! concord! for God's sake! for divided cities are always the prey of the enemy; Florence knows it, and all Italy knows it. Against the enemies of our freedom, against the traitors and rebels to this republican state, let the hates, the powers, the arms of all be directed; but whoever repents him of his apostacy, and returns to his duty as a citizen, let him be received as a brother. Remember how *Lorenzo de' Medici* died: the blessed *Fra Girolamo* offered him mercy and pardon on the sole condition, that he should restore to the state what he unjustly held, and to the people their liberty. He refused the pardon, and died like an impious knave, as he was; but it rested with him to obtain it, and our sainted master would never have denied it to him, had he given sign of penitence, and a desire to restore what he had unjustly taken. So may pardon not be denied to us! How will God aid us, if we obstinately continue to offend him?"

"Oh! *Messer Niccolò*," said *Fra Benedetto*, joining his hands, "how holy are these words! I would that all Florence were present to listen to them!"

The old man then made a sign to *Mona Fede*, who advanced with *Maurice*, and stopping before *Niccolò*, they presented to him the wine and the drinking-cups. *Niccolò* filled the cups, every one took his own, and then all drank. Then *Niccolò*, laying his hands on *Troilo's* shoulders, kissed him on the mouth: this was the custom on such occasions, kissed his daughter and the child, and then all, one after another, did the same. *Niccolò* requested *Madonna Fede*, and the serving man, to drink also. The woman obeyed quickly, and approaching *Liza* with the cup in her hand, she said:

"*Madonna*, I knew this day would come — and — not to feast of it — but I made a vow at the *Servi*, to fast every sabbath, that God and the most holy *Nunziata* might grant us this favor."

"Then I am under obligations to you," said *Liza*, smiling.

But it was not possible to make *Maurice* drink: to the repeated solicitations of his fellow-servant, he constantly replied, "I am not thirsty," and not even *Lamberto* could conquer his obstinacy, and as *Lamberto* gave up the attempt in despair, *Vieri* said, laughing, "If you had known that he did

gaged in free and familiar conversation. All at once, they started with surprise and alarm. The great bell of the city rang three, four times : presently the alarm was increasing, and almost answered by all the bells of the city. A distant murmuring sound, that seemed to proceed from multitudes, who were in tumult at a distance : here and there, and shortly after, the discharge of a cannon. The noise seemed to be drawing near with people, doors and windows were opened with violence, it seemed as if the whole city was in some serious and unexpected accident. People rushed through the streets, becoming more and more noisy and uproar louder, a crowd gathered under the windows, and a voice was heard saying, "To arms ! The State and Liberty are in danger !"

CHAPTER XX.

To attempt to depict the fury which took possession of Niccolò, Averardo, Lamberto, Vieri and Bindo, the consternation of Fra Benedetto and the two young women, and the agitation of Troilo, who expected nothing of the sort, would be utterly useless, but the reader can imagine it. Averardo darted upon his arquebus, which he had left in the corner; he gnashed his teeth, and, almost choking with rage, he exclaimed:

"Cursed be the hour that took me from the walls!"

The other brothers, with Lamberto and Fanfulla, also seized their arms, — and this last, without the least sign of perturbation, for he was too well used to such straits, — lighted with a burning coal the cord of his arquebus, saying, "There is no sham here," and all were just on the point of going out, when five or six men of the lower class, workers in silk, in the employ of Niccolò, came rushing in, and one of them said:

"Messer, there are fifty of us fellows without, who have come to guard your house, and defend you to the death."

"What!" cried Niccolò, "defend me? To the walls! To the walls! If we are all to die to day for our liberties, I wish to be the first!"

And the daring old man grasped a lance that stood in the corner, and started to go out with the others, to hasten like them to the defence: all then entreated, they tried to constrain him to remain, and his daughters, most of all, but he obstinately resisted them, first with words, and then with blows, exclaiming:

"I will die, at any rate!" and without being persuaded or withheld, he was rushing desperately to the door, when a messenger came running from the Signoria, who was sent by the Gonfaloniere, to announce that the enemy were not in Florence, as was rumored, but that they had with a great number of ladders, attempted to scale the walls, and therefore, every one capable of bearing arms, was ordered to hasten beyond the Arno, towards S. Niccolò, where the assault had commenced.

At this announcement, seeing things were not at the last extremity, as he had at first supposed, the old man suffered himself to be persuaded, though not readily, to remain, and, standing at the street door, with uplifted hands, he said in a loud voice, to the young men who were just setting off:

“Adieu, my sons! remember, you are Christians and free citizens, and that we may meet again in paradise!”

They were soon lost in the crowd, and Troilo, who was constrained to show himself daring and willing, thought in his heart, “It would be fine now, if all the promises of Baccio should end in a cursed gun-shot!”

Niccolò then, having dispatched to the scene of action, the greater part of the operatives, who had come to offer him their assistance, retained eight or ten of them to assist him in putting the house in order, and making preparations to sustain an assault. His first frenzy had yielded to the suggestions of reason, and since the city was not conquered, changing his purpose, and considering that his poor daughters might fall into the hands of the soldiers and the Palleschi, he determined to fortify the house, and to resist to the last, and when there remained no other means of deliverance, he would set fire to the house and perish there with his daughters; thus he would preserve his own freedom and their honor, and Niccolò was a man to carry such a purpose into effect. Keeping up the ancient customs of Florence, which he could not bear to have changed in anything, he always kept in readiness the iron implements, the chains and timbers that were to be used in barricading the house. They lay under the piazza of the courtyard; in an instant they were dragged into the street, and disposed in such a manner that they could be put to use at any moment. This done, he sent one of his men into the houses of the Carnesecchi, on the same side of the street with those of the Lapi, but separated from them by the Via de' Conti, requesting them to be in readiness, as he was going to set up the bridge across the street; and, superintending the work himself, he soon saw issue from the apertures made for this purpose in the lower story of this house, long beams, which, shoved forward by the men within, were introduced into corresponding holes in the house of the Carnesecchi. On these beams were laid, one over another, planks, connected together and fastened by hooks, forming a solid bridge, capable of sustaining men and munitions to annoy from above, the enemy who might be in the street. While Niccolò, at the middle of the street, where, from the lights placed at the windows, it was as bright as day, was shouting, now to one, now to another, and

encouraging his men by his words and by his presence, seeing all these preparations, within the house, all the men being transported from the room in which they lay, into the places contiguous to what would be the point of attack, that is, into the great entry which led to the street, and on the lower floor under the windows which looked upon the bridge. Laudomia, Liza and the old woman came to their aid, and all, breathless from the agitation of their faces, and the fatigue and the running back and forth, went wherever they could be of use, bringing bundles of pikes, stones, cross-bows, arquebuses and munitions of every kind.

The same ardor and promptness, manifested by Niccolò and his family on this night, appeared spontaneous and natural in every family in Florence; and the Prince of Orange, who, thinking that in such a dark, rainy night, it being the vigil of S. Martin, he should find the guards negligent and in wine, and with this belief, had suddenly assailed the city, from Porta S. Niccolò to that of S. Friano, provided with a great number of scaling-ladders, thinking to take the city by surprise, was, on the contrary, received by such a shower of artillery, and found the bastions so well defended, that he was obliged to retreat precipitately, and with no small slaughter of his men. But even if they had succeeded in surmounting the walls anywhere, it is not easy to foresee the result; for we believe that not even thus, could they have borne the consequences of victory; for the militia were armed in a moment, all the men ran to the rescue; in the quarters nearest the camp, the bridges and a good way beyond, the streets were filled with armed men; from the houses, the old men, the women and the children, by throwing stones, tiles, and anything that came into their hands, would have lent no small aid to the defence; desperation would have redoubled the force and the ardor of a people who had in past times signalized themselves by their bravery in civil wars, and perhaps the Imperial army, whose number of able-bodied men did not amount to ten thousand, would have found a grave in Florence; the generous and unhappy city, was condemned by God, to destruction and greater punishment.

Very short time, the hostile bands, utterly despairing of success, desisted from the undertaking, and returned to their quarters. From whence, the next day, the Prince of Orange set out for Logna, to obtain from the Emperor and the Pope, who were preparing for the coronation, fresh supplies of men and artillery. Without which, he was convinced he could effect nothing. In the afternoon of the same day, seeing the peril passed, separated,

each one returning to his home, the streets became nearly deserted, the windows were closed, the lights and the great lanterns of the soldiers disappeared, everything returned into its usual quiet and silence, and in every family, the old men and women left at home, hearing the footsteps of sons, brothers, husbands, who had left them but a little while before, with the probability that they should never again see them alive, and who were now returning in safety, after having, by their own exertions, repulsed the enemy and saved the city, ran to meet them with rejoicing, caresses, praises, embraces and tears of joy, returning thanks to God for saving them from impending ruin. These robust men, these poor *popolani*, tired, wet with sweat, with rain, and some of them, with blood, now laid aside for a short time, their heavy arms, aided by their wives, sisters, or aged fathers, who set themselves to furbishing and preparing them for future use; and their hopes and their ardor, being quickened by the victory they had won, they could now take a little repose; and, seated at the fire, or partaking of such food as their limited means and the present scarcity would allow, surrounded by their little ones, who, scarcely recovered from their fright, stood by with open mouths, they narrated the particulars of the assault, the irruption of the enemy, their weapons, banners, strange ways and barbarous faces, which could be seen very distinctly from the walls, from the immense number of lanterns and torches which the enemy carried. They described vividly the arrival of the enemy, the planting of the ladders, the impetuosity with which the foe mounted them, and they told how, all at once, from the flanks of the bastion, where were concealed huge cannons and artillery of every calibre, as from so many mouths of hell, belched forth an overwhelming fire, which, striking the ladders sidewise, sent them with a crash, with all the men upon them, in a heap into the trench; and then they expatiated upon the wounds, the bloodshed, the strange and horrible deaths of these wretches, the shrieks, the lamentations, the staggering fall of the mortally wounded, the smoke that shrouded everything, and the incessant thunder and lightning of so many cannons, and then altogether returned anew their thanks to God, for having saved them from the hands of such ferocious enemies.

Those among the defenders who had been wounded, immediately received medical aid: those most injured, in the hospitals, and the others in private houses; and, in the meantime, lists were made out of the names of those citizens who had fallen in the assault: some bewailed them, some prayed for them, but the greater portion envied them, firmly believing that their spirits, like those of the martyrs, ascended immediately

to enjoy the glories of paradise; and the most devout and zealous among the Piagnoni, thinking that on this occasion was perhaps verified the prophecy of Fra Girolamo, which promised to Florence the aid of the angels, became still more fervent in their faith, feeling sure of their celestial allies, and there were not wanting some, who affirmed that they actually saw in the air, seraphs, who, with flaming swords, put the enemy to rout, mowing down, at every stroke, whole files of the Imperial troops.

No one, more than Niccolò, could boast of an entire and lively faith in the Frate, and if he was not internally persuaded (he had too much good sense to believe in a literal fulfilment of the prophecy) that the angels would visibly appear to defend Florence, he nevertheless founded upon the words of Savonarola, his hope, not to say certainty, of a special celestial aid, by which the enemy should be repelled. Notwithstanding this, he had believed in the possibility of their entering the city! When the peril had passed, and the uproar ceased, he returned to his room with his daughters, and seating himself at his hearth, and revolving in his mind the success of the evening, he exclaimed with a sigh:

“*Modicæ fidei! quare dubitasti!*” words often used by Fra Girolamo, and which he now applied to himself, deeply pained at having suffered himself to vacillate for a moment.

While he was occupied with these thoughts, Laudomia and Lina stood at the window, anxiously awaiting the return of the young men, not without agitation and fear that something had befallen them. But soon every anxiety was dissipated. Towards midnight all returned, except Averardo, who rarely came home to sleep, and who desired no other chamber than the embrasures of the bastions, and no other bed than the bare ground; and that joy, that overflowing gratitude, which we endeavored to depict in describing the return of the citizen-soldiers to their homes, gushed forth equally in the house of the Lapi, when first Bindo, and then the others, entering in high spirits and throwing their heavy arquebuses, still blackened by the recent conflict, with a clang into the corner, and bringing with them a smell of burnt powder that soon filled the room, placed themselves in a circle around Niccolò and the young women, each relating in his way, with the greatest delight, and in bold and stirring language, the glorious discomfiture of the Imperial arms, and each one, trying to outdo the other, in narrating his own prowess and that of his friends, and of the most noted citizens. Niccolò learned that Bindo had received a shot on the left side of his corselet, but the boy, insisting that it was

nothing, and showing that he made no account of it, pointing with sparkling eyes to the dint left in his sword, said, "Even I am a soldier now!"

Vieri told how Lamberto had, with much judgment and skill, hurled a huge stone upon a ladder filled with men from top to bottom; that he emptied it, he said, just as one would strip the dry leaves from a withered branch, and then, seizing the ladder by the two ends which rested against the wall, he overturned it into the trench, crippling and killing with its weight, many more of the enemy.

Then all praised Troilo for his bravery, and Bindo more than the others, for he had fought at Troilo's side, and had seen him deal his blows at such a rate, that many Imperialists and Palleschi, had they known by what hand their wounds were inflicted, might have said that Troilo acted the part of Piagnone rather too naturally.

In fact, he had borne himself like a daring, valiant soldier, for, finding himself at this pass, he could not do otherwise; but he chafed internally at being obliged to run the risk of killing some of his friends, or of being killed by them, and he most devoutly sent the pestilence upon Baccio Valori, for bringing him into such a scrape, and had he discovered him among the enemy, it is by no means certain, that he would not, with the aid of his arquebus, have given him reason to be less pleased with his contrivance of sending him to Florence.

To the encomiums of Bindo, Niccolò evidently listened with the greatest satisfaction, as Troilo's conduct, on this occasion, was more and more confirmatory of his complete transformation, and of his love for the party that desired liberty and a republican government.

Troilo replied, assuming an air of great humility and contrition, "Messer Niccolò, what merit can one have for fighting with ardor in a cause so holy, and when one knows by manifest tokens that God is with us! And if it did not seem — if I did not fear to seem too ready to lend faith to certain things in which one ought to exercise great caution — I should almost dare assert, that this night, I have seen angels repulsing the enemy from the walls." The impostor knew that such was the belief of the Piagnoni, and he had heard it whispered among the people, that very night, that the apparition had been observed by many during the attack.

"God can do everything," answered Niccolò, "and this may, perhaps, be true, but do our sins deserve such grace? At any rate, we are certain, that God will be a shield to our weakness, and, where human strength cannot reach, *there can reach*

the arm of the Almighty ! Of this much, Fra Girolamo has assured us, and his miracles are a pledge that he was inspired by God ! My children, last evening I was a cause of scandal to you : I showed that I had my doubts ! I did wrong, and I feel bound to acknowledge my fault, in order that you may not follow a bad example, but continue firm in that faith by which we shall at last obtain the victory."

To a man like Niccolò, such a candid confession must have been exceedingly painful, but he was one of those who are capable of sacrificing everything to the truth, and himself first of all.

Without waiting for a reply, he dismissed the company, referring to the lateness of the hour, and the need they all had of repose, and, being left alone, he opened the journal in which he was accustomed to note down anything of importance which might have occurred in the course of the day, and, after describing the events of the evening, and again warmly commending to God, the city, his family and himself, the old man laid him down and soon fell asleep.

But not upon all, under that roof, did sleep this night descend so easily. Lamberto, having gone up into the little room which he had occupied from a child, and which for him was filled with memories once so sweet, but now so bitter, called his servant to assist him in disarming himself, and while Maurice was lending his services, he raised his eyes now and then to the face of his master, who, from time to time, was unable to repress a sigh.

The Swiss shook his head and whistled : for, not thinking it proper for him to broach the subject which he supposed was agitating Lamberto's mind, he hoped, by some means or other, to lead him to begin upon it himself, but he could not bring his artillery to bear, and he had already taken off all the armor without Lamberto's showing any consciousness of his manœuvres, or uttering a word.

Maurice then began to wipe and polish the armor with a cloth, hanging it piece by piece upon nails fixed in the wall. When he came to the dagger, he drew it from the sheath to clean the blade ; now, looking at it in the gleam of the light to see where it needed cleaning, and now rubbing it, he watched stealthily the countenance of Lamberto, who was undressing ; and saw that it was clouded and sad. Seeing Lamberto thus, he could no longer contain himself, and he said without raising his eyes from his work :

" I know a good place for this fine blade ! "

" Where ? " asked Lamberto, smiling at the corners of his mouth, for he half guessed what Maurice meant.

"In Messer Droile's entrails."

"Nonsense, put it down, put it into the sheath and go to bed."

"I will go; but Messer Droile has the face of a traitor, not that of an honest man. I am a poor soldier, poor servant, cannot talk, but this evening I wanted to say, don't drink the wine, Messer Lamberto, don't drink the wine. However, *I*," he added, shaking his head in his peculiar way, "*I* did not drink!"

Lamberto, half scolding, and half laughing at his German manner, dismissed him, telling him that a good sleep, would cure him of his madness, and he went away still repeating, "But *I* did not drink," and his motive in being so anxious to establish this fact, we shall see by and by.

Lamberto flung himself upon his bed, where he remained perhaps, half an hour; then, finding his state of mind insupportable, he started up, and partly dressing himself, he went to the window, opened it, and seated himself with his elbows resting on the window-sill, to inhale the fresh air.

That life of sacrifice which he had promised to lead, had commenced with a trial that was most grievous to him. One may imagine his emotions upon finding himself in that very house whence he had departed but a few years before, full of hope, and love, and rapturous visions; upon beholding the same terrace, where Liza had given him that rose, the too faithful symbol of her inconstancy; for her, he had renounced Landomia, had encountered fatigues and perils, had left his mother, (and the parting had proved a final one); for her, he had refused one word of comfort to that unhappy woman, whom he had met on the banks of the Po, — that Selvaggia, who, in spite of his efforts to the contrary, presented herself from time to time to his mental vision, and, contrasting her situation with that of Liza, he asked himself: "Why is it that when God pardons every sin, that there are some sins which man will not excuse in his fellow-creature?"

"Shall she who has broken her plighted faith, and betrayed country and kindred, find excuse and pardon, and shall a wretched woman, betrayed by her own father, and dragged into guilt in her own despite, find neither mercy nor pity from any one, — the one, to lead a life of misery, amidst mockery and outrage, the other, to be received on an honorable footing with her equals, and live happy and contented!"

To think that she was in the room on the next floor, in the arms of one, for whom she had so cruelly betrayed him, and that this he must endure; that it was his duty, even to pardon

both, constrained to it by circumstances so strange and so
 ected, that when he thought of them, they seemed like a
 , — all this was a grievous burden, it was a bitter cup for
 erto, who had not yet learnt, that every year added to the
 man, passes, bearing away with it a hope, and leaving in
 ice a pang. He was still at that age, when felicity is be-
 to be distant indeed, and difficult of reach, but still real,
 able, the ordinary condition, so to say, of life, and wretch-
 s only one of the exceptions. Forced now to forget the past,
 ounce the plans, the desires of so many years, consoling
 lf with the thought that his misfortunes had come upon
 t an age when he was incapable of avoiding them, and
 ing himself that his future would be more wisely ordered,
 med to him, that the counsels of his mother, which he
 ated almost as divine ordinances, pointed out to him the
 way of arriving at that felicity, that quiet contentedness
 art, from which he now felt so far distant. His mind thus
 d to Laudomia, whom from a child he would have loved
 eference to Liza, had she not seemed to him a being too
 and holy, and to whom, even now, he would never have
 med to raise his thoughts, but for the advice of his mother,
 the cordial welcome he had received from Niccolò, he
 it to picture to himself a new life, hallowed and brightened
 r love. But while his fancy was revelling in these sweet
 nations, his feelings were suddenly arrested by an obstacle,
 he himself could not define, and on which he could not
 to suffer his thoughts to rest, as if he feared that, upon a
 ugh examination, he should find there something that
 l, at one stroke, cut off every new-born hope, forbidding
 o obey his mother's wishes, and rendering him unworthy
 e angelic love of Laudomia.

is this obstacle real, or was it imaginary? And what was
 Not even Lamberto, we repeat it, could have answered
 questions; judge then, kind reader, if we ourselves can
 r them. But, perhaps, the sequel of our story will do
 id leaving the young man fluctuating amid his doubts, we
 eek the other inhabitants of the Lapi house, for to none
 em, with the exception of Liza, were wanting this night,
 ating cares and bitter thoughts.

udomia, after having conducted the married pair to the
 assigned them, shut herself in her own, which was directly
 : that of Lamberto, and kneeling before a *prie-dieu*, on
 i rested a picture of Our Lady, the work of the sainted
 lico da Fiesole, she prayed fervently: and from thoughts
 ed, descending to those of her country, her father and

sister, she implored for all the divine favor, returning thanks for deliverance from the late threatening danger. To have seen her thus in prayer, with her sweet, modest face, placid mien, clasped hands and down-cast eyes, one would have thought the face of the Virgin had been copied from her own. She arose in a few minutes and sought her couch.

She was soon lost in sleep, but it was not long before she was awakened by a noise; at first, she knew not whence it proceeded, but she soon heard steps in the room overhead, and her thoughts, naturally turning to Lamberto, one by one, there came up before her all the circumstances connected with him from their childhood; her thoughts resting with delight on that epoch when he consecrated to her his first thought of love: for Laudomia was modest, but, at the same time, possessed of great penetration, and she was, at that time, well aware of the feelings of Lamberto towards her, and the cause which prevented their avowal, and when shortly after, his heart became ensnared by the more accessible and less reserved Liza, she readily sacrificed to her, all thought of self, solely to procure for her what she regarded as the greatest of all good fortune. But now that things were so changed, she seemed to see in the series of recent events, the overruling hand of God, pointing to her final union with him, with whom alone she felt she could be happy. Some remarks made to her by her father, on the evening of Lamberto's arrival, confirmed her in these thoughts, and persuaded her that it was lawful to open her heart anew to hope. Taking her by the hand, when they were left alone together, he had said to her:

"I have had so much at heart, have been so much harassed by the perils of the siege, that I have not thought as much as I ought, of your safety and your future welfare. For more than a year you have refused many highly honorable proposals for your hand: you have had your own reasons, doubtless, in which I have not intermeddled; but now, as you see, I am old, and a thousand perils surround you. I would gladly see you resting on the arm of one able to guide and defend you. I have thought of Lamberto for you. Now it belongs to you to consider the subject. If I should command you to give him your hand, would you obey me?"

Laudomia, who never confounded modesty with dissimulation, blushed slightly, but answered him plainly and ingenuously:

"Papa, I would *obey* you, and my obedience would have little merit."

Niccolò, well pleased, now began to consider how he should

carry his plans into effect, and he made up his mind, that when the agitation, which Lamberto would naturally feel at his return, upon learning the changes which had taken place, should have subsided, he would introduce the subject himself.

Thus Landomia, now revolving in her mind the designs of her father, said to herself, "How happy am I to have refused all other proposals!" Then, turning with her whole heart to Our Lady of Frate Angelico, which so vividly portrayed the divine mother of purity, she prayed her to call down upon her spirit the blessing of heaven, to receive her under her mantle, and always to preserve her unspotted in word and deed, and in offering these prayers for herself, she felt that she did the same for Lamberto, with whom, it seemed to her, she was henceforth to have one life, one interest, one heart.

With thoughts as diverse and remote from these as hell from heaven, or the mind of a traitor from that of an angel, Troilo, too, was holding his vigil at the side of Liza, who, alone at this hour, having regained the summit of her wishes, and thinking her felicity permanently established, was enjoying a tranquil and refreshing slumber. She knew not, poor creature, that certain errors never escape their punishment, even in this life; that retributive justice may sometimes procrastinate, but, sent by God upon the track of the culprit, never loses sight of him, and overtakes him after long years of delay, when he has, perhaps, forgotten to have merited it.

Troilo, at this time, who had too many hazardous undertakings on his hands to be able to fall asleep so easily, and aware of the necessity of closely considering and weighing all his actions in the arduous position in which he found himself, went on soliloquizing:

"Here I am, then, actually in the house! The entrance has been admirably effected; it remains to be seen how I am to get out! Body of Fra Girolamo and all the Dominicans! What a countenance that old man has! I dropped on my knees before him like a child! By all the saints, this I never could have imagined. If this should be known in the camp, wouldn't they think me an arrant simpleton, wouldn't they laugh a little? And that Alberto, Adalberto, or whatever his name is, stood as bolt upright as if he had swallowed the yard-stick he has used for so many years in measuring off his stuffs, and he actually gave me a look of defiance! Is he capable of imagining that he can frighten me? Now that he has a sword at his side, he thinks he is a great character, and I remember—how many years ago was it? Seeing him in the shop on the corner of *Vaccherella*, reeling silk with the other shop-boys—

I vow, such things are real comedies ! Alberto ! This poltroon has taken a name to himself, as if he were one of the dukes of Brandenburg ! If it were not for my interest to have patience, I would have taught him this very evening in a way that — I have robbed him of his mistress, forsooth ! If that is all he has against me, let him come and take her. I will lend him a hand if necessary, and, not to be hard with him, I'll give him the child into the bargain ; for, if it be true that boys inherit the quality of the mother, this one, as he grows up, will have more of the silk weaver than the gentleman ! As he said this, he turned upon poor Liza who, with her infant, was sleeping at his side, a look expressive of distaste and satiety, which he now so strongly felt towards this unhappy woman.

To some among my readers, male or female, if I am so fortunate as to have any, it may perhaps appear impossible for a human heart to arrive to such a degree of perversity. Happy for them, they have not had the ill fortune to know all the wickedness of our nature !

Following up these same thoughts, he continued :

“ Most truly has he of Ferrara said,

‘ Che non v’è soma da portar più grave
Come aver donna quando a noja s’ave.’*

And I — God knows how long it will be my portion to enjoy this pleasure ! and, besides, to have always under my eyes this bewitching sister of hers, who seems a half-opened lily — would it be possible ? — to find some means ? Ah ! take heed. Messer Troilo, there is no jesting here, for neither the old man nor these gruff wolves of brothers, would be wanting, if such a thing should be suspected ! However, not to die of *ennui* in this sepulchre, one must avail himself of what is to be had, and so to contrive some amusement. The thing is difficult, it is true, but with regard to woman, Troilo never undertakes an easy conquest ; and if I do succeed, more than one in the camp there will have to doff his cap to me ; for the daughters of Niccolò de’ Lapi are quite another sort from the silly fools that they go making their boasts about every day ! Well, we shall see ! I have succeeded with the others ; let but the siege be prolonged, and with time and patience — but to tell the truth, if these madmen go on as they did in the assault of this evening, our people will have something to do ; for I believe that when they shall have entered the city, they will have to pitch their camp before this house, to get posses-

* A free version of which is, “ no greater bore than a mistress can be weary of.”

sion of it — for have I not seen how our master of the house worked here? In a twinkling, the barricading apparatus, the bridge, the house, filled with pikes, arquebuses, cross-bows, looking like the castle of S. Angelo when Rome was sacked. And Messer Baccio wants him to fall alive into his hands! He wants to have a talk with Niccolò!"

Towards the last of these words, the knave began to yawn and stretch, for he was growing drowsy; he remained a little while longer revolving his plans, and ruminating more particularly on that which concerned Laudomia, (it is painful to conceive of her pure image depicted in the mind of this wretch, but the rays of the sun are reflected unblemished from the filthiest pool,) then he settled his head upon his pillow, and was soon sound asleep.

Not long after, about an hour before day, Niccolò awoke, for his sleep, like that of most old people, was usually of short duration, and on this night more so than ever, for he was not sufficiently master of himself to prevent the idea of having Troilo in the house from molesting him, and exciting in him certain undefined suspicions, which, when he sought to investigate their origin, eluded his grasp, and he became lost in a thousand doubts, each of which was inconsiderable in itself, but when united to the others, weighed upon his mind and filled him with anxiety.

The reunion of Troilo to Liza, his return to Florence, and his joining the popular party, had been so favorably colored as to take away all occasion for distrust; but the knave, subtle and crafty though he may be, wears ever on his brow an indelible mark (God be praised and thanked for it), which in a manner more or less evident, betrays him; and fraud, much as it may seek to cover and conceal itself with the garments of truth and honesty, carries about with it a pestilential odor, which reveals its presence; this, however, is often of no avail, for honest men, through fear of suffering themselves to be deceived and of wronging the innocent, will not yield to these indications, but seek for proofs; and the knave, meantime, makes his entrance boldly; and this was exactly what had taken place with Niccolò, who, cogitating upon the conduct of Troilo, knew not where to find fault with him, and was compelled to say, "It must be imagination, or perhaps the hatred I have borne him so long — but I do not feel satisfied." Then summoning his courage, and feeling as if he could encounter a hundred men as readily as one, he added, "At last all will be as God wills, and time will clear up everything." And seeking to divert his mind from these anxious thoughts

he began to dress, for already from many of the churches was sounding the Ave Maria of the day.

Having said his prayers before the niche which contained the ashes of Fra Girolamo, he lighted a candle at the lamp which burned there day and night, renewed the fire in the chimney, and, sitting down, he began to think how he should speedily bring about his design of marrying Laudomia to Lamberto, for it seemed to him that, could that be accomplished, he should have thus provided, so far as lay in his power at this time, for the welfare and safety of his daughter. At length he decided to delay no longer, but to open his mind to the young man that very day; and first, he was undecided whether to speak or write to him, but he finally concluded to converse with him on the subject, thinking that he could thus more easily disclose to him his inmost thoughts, for his own heart would not have suffered him to use anything like restraint in the case, his desire being rather to sanction and acquiesce in the free choice of Lamberto.

Meantime, it was gradually growing light, and Niccolò hearing, in the upper part of the house, Madonna Fede going about her work, came to the foot of the stairs, and calling her, told her to send Lamberto to him as soon as he should have arisen; he was already up and dressed, and descending quickly, presented himself to the old man, who made him sit down by him, and, looking kindly at him, after a few preliminary words, he said:

"Now, listen to me, Lamberto; if this city were not in peril, as she is, and you were not one of my family, as you are, and neither more nor less henceforth, than my other sons, I should never have said to you so openly, what I am now about to say. But these ruinous times admit of no delay, neither is it necessary that I use any circumlocution with you, for we know each other perfectly. You know, and I do not forget, the immense obligation I owe to Piero, your father, and you must recollect, that, wishing to give you the strongest possible proof of my gratitude, and being aware of your love for Liza, I one day held a conversation with you, in which I informed you how much satisfaction this gave me.

"Then it was the will of God, that both you and I should pass through tribulation; and things went on, you well know how. But take courage, you deserve other wife than that giddy girl would have made you.

"I hold you to be of too lofty thought, to allow the least spark of the love you bore her, to remain in your heart, after the course she has taken towards you.

"Now, then, without farther prolixity, consider, Lamberto, at another daughter remains to me; think of this, and know besides, that Niccolò could close his eyes in peace, if, dying, he could repose in the thought, that Laudomia was not left alone, and without support, in these sad times. I am frank with you, perhaps more so than would be proper in ordinary times, — you so with me, — do you not speak with your father? with a man who will never know joy or repose until he sees you happy?"

At these words, spoken in tones of so much tenderness, Lamberto's agitation, which had been steadily increasing as Niccolò went on, knew no bounds; he took his hand, pressed it to his lips, and remaining so a few moments, he replied:

"Oh! see if I will not be frank with you, — I will tell you everything from the very beginning — without even first thanking you as I ought."

And here, beginning with those early days, when he had, as a boy, given his affections to Laudomia, he told the history of his heart, of the different impressions he had experienced up to the time of his return, painted the sorrow, the terrible anguish he had suffered, when thinking of his mother; related the conversation he had had on the subject with Fra Zaccaria; spoke of the letter she had left for him, and added, "Oh, yes! the greatest, the highest of my desires, the sole hope that I could cherish in the future, was that of soon obtaining that good of which I now speak. But such was the agitation of my mind, that this seemed an illusion, and I distrusted it as a mockery. Oh! I arrived at so much — why should the consolation of hoping be taken from us, — the necessary condition of misery? I saw a guilty, obstacle in everything — I trembled to open anew my heart to this affection, (for I thought, should I find myself deceived, it would be more than I could bear,) to this passion, which I now know, was the first, the only one of my life, what could ever cancel it — I believed it was turned to stone — Oh! how I deceived myself! — It seems to me now as if I had awaked from a long sleep — Oh! but who can deem himself worthy of Laudomia, — of that angel? Who can be presuming as to hope for her love?"

For a long time, Niccolò had not known joy equal to that which he felt at this moment. The impassioned words of the young man assured him, that the fulfilment of his wishes would be welcome to either Laudomia or Lamberto, but would increase the happiness of both. He had it on his lips to say to Niccolò, "console yourself, then, for she loves you," but he restrained himself, restrained by a sense of dignity, and a regard

for his daughter, which we dare not call excessive, and he said to himself, "Now this business cannot miscarry, it is best to leave them to understand each other."

Then, laying his hand on the young man's forehead, he said, smiling, "Ha! think you so? A soldier like you so distrustful of himself? You are both my children, and I should do wrong to favor one more than the other, and, therefore, I say to you, if she deserves your love, you deserve hers."

"Oh! what do you say?" said Lamberto, shaking his head, and seeming absorbed in his thoughts.

But if he loved Laudomia, as in fact he did more than he himself was aware of, why was he thoughtful and perplexed? If, from the description we have attempted to give of Lamberto, the reader has been able to comprehend his noble and scrupulously delicate mind, they will cease to wonder at the feelings which at this time agitated his mind.

Exactly because his love for Laudomia was the first he had experienced, the only one that could satisfy a heart like his, and which, therefore, awoke to new life after experience, which had repressed indeed, but never extinguished it, did this noble spirited man fear that he could not offer a heart as pure, as untouched by all other love, as he believed she deserved.

Calling to mind Selvaggia and her piteous condition, he still felt moved in his inmost soul, and this just compassion, worthy of every gentle soul, this concern (how could he help feeling it?) that he felt for an unhappy woman who had so desperately abandoned herself to her passion poor Lamberto gave her, in exchange for feelings of a very different nature, and, sighing, he thought:

"Shall I be such a wretch as to offer to Laudomia a heart where remains one vestige of the image of a ——" He could not endure the idea, nor finish the phrase.

Agitated the preceding night by these perplexities, he had not succeeded in surmounting them, nor in distinguishing the real from the imaginary, for, when the passions are in a tempest, the judgment becomes obscured, and is no longer to be trusted.

At this point, however, the intense delight which he felt on hearing these words of Niccolò, fell like a ray of light upon his soul, and revealed to him plainly, how deeply-rooted there, was his love for Laudomia. So, after a few minutes, his countenance recovering its serenity, he turned to Niccolò, who was watching him, not without surprise, and said to him:

"The too high opinion which you have of me is precisely what troubles me — but whatever I may be, whether deserving

or not of your favor, I wish that you knew me better — that you knew everything — for it seems to me that I should be treacherous to you, if I concealed from you a single thought — be you, then, my judge."

Lamberto then narrated from the very beginning, everything that related to Selvaggia; he opened his whole heart to Niccolò, showing to him with the most entire openness, his doubts, fears, and his every emotion, and the old man, who, from the experience of a long life, had learned much of men and things, and who knew how rare it is to find men who, in regard to love and women, give much heed to scruples like these, became aware what a treasure Laudomia would possess, in becoming the wife of one who seemed formed on the very model of herself. And when the young man had made an end of his confession, as it may be called, he took his head between both his hands, and kissing him on the forehead with an effusion of tenderness, he said:

"Go, if I could have created you purposely for the husband of Laudomia, I could not have imagined the half of what you possess. I read in your heart more than you can see there yourself. You love Laudomia, and if you had not felt pity for that other unfortunate woman, you would not be the Lamberto that you are. Now, be of good cheer, and, if you can (as I doubt not) make your love acceptable to Laudomia, know at the same time, that before I die, I shall have, through your means, one moment of happiness, in the midst of the many ills that threaten us — for, as you see, I have but a little while longer to live, but of that I shall not have a thought, when I am certain that you will remain the guardian and counsellor of this my family, for I confide in you, Lamberto, more than in any other person."

CHAPTER XXI.

IN saying these words, the face of Niccolò assumed a serious expression. For a moment he seemed overcome by his emotions, then he continued, "Since we have come to this point, I wish you to know that I rely upon you, to fill my place when I shall no longer be in this world. Averardo is courageous and patriotic, but he is exceedingly fierce, and his impetuosity often gets the better of his prudence. Vieri is also a good citizen, and he has his good qualities, but he is wanting in solidity. Bindo is but a boy. And now this Troilo is added to the number. I do not actually distrust him; but he was a Pallesco, his ancestors, and he himself until now, have ever been enemies to us and to this state; he is of the seed of traitors. Perhaps I do wrong to bring forward these things. At any rate, my dear Lamberto, you must promise me to have the same care of this house and of my children, that I had for you when a child, and to exercise for their benefit, that good sense and prudence, with which, for your good fortune, you are so much better endowed than they. Will you promise me this, Lamberto?"

"Oh! my father, can you think it necessary for me to give you this assurance? Such as I am, and what little good I possess, do I not hold it all from you and yours, and can you doubt?"

The eyes and whole countenance of the young man expressed so much in uttering these words, that Niccolò quickly replied.

"You are right; there needs no promise between us. I can read your heart, and if you can equally read mine, you can see what faith I repose in you; and if I spoke thus, it was only that my words might remain more vividly impressed upon your memory. Now, then, hear me. Keep in mind, that this house has acquired some reputation, which it has honorably and securely maintained, adhering to our holy religion and to the liberty of this democratic state, — for it is not possible for one of these to exist without the other. Religion without liberty, would not be religion, but fraud and hypocrisy. Did not Christ,

our king die equally for all? Does he not teach us to regard all men as our brethren, and not to curse even the violent, the proud, them that exalt themselves upon the ruins of the weak, who possess themselves of their property and their rights, and constrain their victims to devote to *their* interests their labors and their lives? And those who thus act, who are they but the enemies of religion, and, at the same time, of liberty? Those, then, are most hurtful to the community, who cover their wrong-doing with the cloak of religion. What has been the policy of the Medici and of all the Palleschi? What have been their motives in erecting convents, establishing orders of friars, endowing churches and hospitals? Facts have demonstrated. Liberty, then, without religion, if it were possible to establish it, could not endure; it would be annihilated by whoever among the citizens should be able to take precedence of the others, either by riches or power, or by cunning and artifice, for, not having the check of religion, such a man would not hesitate to commit violence and injustice, and to assume the rule of the state. Let, then, your first and constant thought be, to maintain them both, for where *these* are safe, *you* will still be safe, and not otherwise.

"But the Palleschi are not the only enemies to be feared. A rumor is spreading through the city, which fills my mind with suspicion. The faction of Niccolò Capponi, the faction of the *grandees*, who would be willing to have a more stringent government, provided that they retain their supremacy, has it in its power, to bring upon this people, a calamity far greater than that to be feared from the Palleschi, and the enemy without. They now profess to belong to the people, but are they to be trusted? In all times, and almost in all nations, the great, by nobility and riches, have always directed their efforts to limiting and crushing the liberties of the people, hoping thus to increase their own worldly advantages, or to enjoy them more fully and more securely; and, from these motives, in revolutions and civil dissensions, they always incline rather to tyranny than to freedom. It will be well to keep an eye upon this class, Lamberto. I have conversed upon this subject with some of our statesmen, and I find them of the same opinion. Now, I have wished to speak of this to you, in order, that one day, when you have to exercise the duties of office, (then, thank God, this siege will be at an end, and the city free and happy, and I shall be no more,) when it shall be your lot to become one of the rulers of the people, then, you will remember these words of Niccolò, and make use of them for the good of your country. And know, Lamberto, that, among

a people who are becoming corrupted, as ours but too truly is, good laws and good ordinances avail little or nothing, unless the rich and the great desist from coercive measures, and avoid forming factions among themselves. What avails it, in fact, that the votes of free men are necessary to elect the magistrates, rulers, and all those whose duty it is to frame and maintain the laws, if these are sold, and those in power purchase them? Therefore, I repeat it, beware of these men, who are the most dangerous enemies to a state of freedom, whom, in the beginning, it is impossible to keep down, because they are not openly culpable, and, in the end, because they are too powerful." In the words of the old man, there was such an effusion of confidence, that Lamberto, who, surprised and agitated, had listened with breathless and reverential attention, could not help exclaiming,

"My God! if you were at your last hour, you could not speak otherwise. Oh! why do you hold such language to me? I am not one to expect ever to hold any authority in Florence, but should that day ever arrive, God grant that the time may be hastened, that I may have the aid of your counsels, to support and direct me, in rightly fulfilling the duties which may devolve upon me."

"Perhaps this time will be hastened, as you say; it may, however, be far distant. I wish to give you this gratuitous advice, on this day, when it seems to me, more than ever, that you have become my son. My good Lamberto, my words sadden you, I see it; they give you the feeling of a last parting; your affection is dear to me, God knows, but this is a time for manly thoughts, not for weak regrets; sooner or later we must all quit this stage of action — the time when, matters little; but it matters much to me, that death will not cut me down so unexpectedly, that I shall not have made every disposition in my power, for the good of the city, and of my family. Now, go; may God bless you a thousand fold!"

Lamberto left the room, his heart overflowing with gratitude, and, if possible, with a higher veneration than ever of Niccolò; full of the thought of Laudomia, and of the manner in which he should declare himself. He would not have delayed seeking her for a moment, but, just then, a summons arrived, requiring every one, for some reason of grave importance, to repair to the public square and place himself under his standard, for which reason, all the young men of the Lapi family left the house, and were not able to return for the day.

In the course of the day, Laudomia found herself alone with her father, who did not conceal from her the conversation he

had held with Lamberto, and, full of gladness, he assured her, that the heart of Lamberto was hers.

A gleam of joy appeared on the face of Laudomia, so serene, so pure, that it plainly revealed how divine a thing is love, when unspotted by guilt, unsaddened by fear, undisturbed by remorse. She raised her streaming eyes to heaven, joining her hands and pressing them to her bosom, in an attitude of thankfulness, and, in her heart, gratitude to God, and love to Lamberto, were fused into a single emotion, ineffable and ardent, which, for a moment, tinged her pale cheek with a light carnation, while, with a tremulous voice, she said :

"Poor Lamberto ! I *knew* it."

Niccolò pressed her to his heart, and kissed her forehead, then he added :

"However, I was not willing to tell him what I had read in your soul, nor did I tell him that you loved him."

Laudomia raised her eyes to his face, and, much surprised, said in such an honest, ingenuous way, that it moved the old man to a smile :

"Oh ! why did you not tell him, when it is so true ? Poor Lamberto, it would have given him pleasure."

"It will give him far more pleasure to hear it from your mouth," said Niccolò ; then taking his daughter's hand between his own, and, with a look of tenderness, which, on his habitually stern visage, was all the more impressive, he continued :

"My Laudomia, you have arrived at an era the most serious and important in the life of a woman. On this occasion, more than any other, you seem to need the sympathizing heart of a mother, but, poor child, you have lost her. But from heaven she blesses and prays for you ; and, if I cannot fully supply her place to you, the exceeding love that I bear you, or rather, perhaps, *her* mind, from above, inspires me with those counsels and thoughts most appropriate to your present state. You see in what perils this people are involved ; in happier days, to be the betrothed of a man like Lamberto, would have given you the promise of a life of gladness. Instead of this, I pray God, and he knows with what sincerity, to make you happy, and to heap upon my head every misfortune, provided, that thus they may be kept from yours ; but, will my prayer be heard ? In view, then, of the perils which threaten our city, arm yourself with intrepidity, Laudomia, for, perhaps, you will have need of it ; be prepared for every fortune, and so fortify your soul, that you may show yourself worthy of your religion, of your country, of that blood which

flows in your veins, which has been transmitted there, thank God, free and honored."

Here the face of the old man suddenly darkened, he knit his brows, and, raising his clenched hand with a menacing gesture, he exclaimed :

"Ah, Liza, Liza! but for you this vaunt might have been less empty." At this moment, he felt, on his cold hand, the touch of the tepid lips of Laudomia, he felt there the warmth of a falling tear; he resumed his composure, and continued :

"And to show yourself a worthy daughter of God, and of Florence, occasions may arise, Laudomia, that will cost you dear. Henceforth, Lamberto should be your first thought, the first object of your affection, among earthly beings; but, even before him, it is your duty to place God and your country — for they are, in a certain degree, one and the same, since the good of the one can never be disjoined from the will of the other. Consider, my daughter, that we live in times, when, for the public safety, this Lamberto, whom you love, who will soon be the father of your children, your sole support, the only comfort that will remain to you after I am gone, this Lamberto must you, with serene eye, behold rushing into the midst of danger and death, you yourself must incite him to incur greater perils; every time that he leaves you, you must feel it is, perhaps, the last, and yet neither weep nor lament, nor give yourself too much to embraces or caresses, or say to him those words which so naturally and impetuously gush from the heart on such occasions, but which stagger and weaken the ardor of the soldier, reminding him of the charms of life, at a time when he should be most indifferent to them. One's country in its perils, has many claims on man, but sometimes, perhaps, it requires more of woman. From the one, it asks *blood, life*, from the other, that of their dearly loved ones.

"Men meet death in the fervor of battle, in the sight of their fellow-citizens and of the enemy, boiling with fury, with patriotism and with love of glory; while the poor women, alone, shut up in the silence of their homes, must hear the distant din of battle, the shouts of the combatants, thinking, perhaps, at this very moment falls the husband, the father, or the brother — of the two, which has the most need of fortitude, of firmness of soul? You weep, my poor Laudomia! Not to terrify or afflict you, have I attempted to set before you the trials which you will be exposed, but that you may know what the duties of a woman, of a wife in a free city, because, if you know their sacredness and importance, your thoughts and meditations will strengthen your spirit, and dispose you

tuously to fulfil them, and you will be sustained by the ennobling thought, that, in maintaining the freedom of a people, in giving the impulse to great and generous deeds, women possess a tremendous power, provided they know how, and are willing to use it, and in this respect, you, I am assured, will not be wanting."

"No, no, my father, I will not fail — I weep not for the want of courage — I am your daughter — still I would not appear braver than I am — and to think that God gives me Lamberto to-day, and perhaps to-morrow —"

Here the voice of the maiden was choked by a stifled sob, her trembling lips became closely compressed; at length she was able to open them with a smile as she said:

"Fear not for me, my father! God will give me strength. And since you hold that even women are good for something, it will not be your Laudomia who will give you cause to change your opinion — we are placed in this world, not merely to enjoy it, but also to suffer, when and in what way it shall please God."

"Now, you have well-spoken, my daughter, for, in this life, the true, the only wisdom consists, not in wearying ourselves in running after that phantom happiness, which ever eludes our pursuit, but in accustoming our minds to the idea of suffering. And since, to resign ourselves to suffering without hope of reward, is impossible, and contrary to our nature, he, who desires to find quiet here below, and strength to support the burdens that oppress him, has no other aid than the hope of a future recompense. If this hope alone guided man, the world would not be in the hands of the violent, the ambitious, the iniquitous; and down-trodden liberty would raise her head.

"But," said the old man smiling, "I wished to speak of yourself and of your affairs, instead of which I am talking of affairs of state! But how can I help it? My life is near its close, my greatest anxiety is for my country, and my mind leads me sometimes, contrary to my intention, to talk only of her. However, with regard to your own affairs, I have already told you enough, and I perceive you have understood me well. Now be of good cheer, God grant that you may not be put to too severe a test!"

This dialogue took place, as we have said, while there was no one at home but Niccolò and his daughters. Liza, who was in her chamber with her baby, seeing Laudomia appear with agitated countenance and fearful eyes, anxiously interrogated her and learned from her sister, her thoughts, her feelings, and

everything which had just passed between her and her father. Laudomia spoke with that warm and expansive affection, which owes its origin to the necessity for disclosure with those we love, to the desire of imparting to them the joys, the secrets of the heart, and she was too intent upon what she was saying, too much agitated and perhaps too ingenuous to perceive the effect which her words had upon her sister.

Liza listened to her with a smile, which she tried to make affectionate and complacent: the reader already knows her narrow, selfish nature.

The unexpected turn which things had taken, was, indeed, a cruel blow to her vanity; she was stung to the quick by the idea that Lamberto's love for her had been of a nature so unreasonably evanescent; that it was not such as she had figured to herself, and which she thought she deserved. This idea came doubly painful to her self-love, because she could not discern how abject was the motive which produced it, for there is no greater vexation to the vain and conceited, than to find themselves lowered and made ridiculous in their own estimation, and this chagrin was bitterly and strikingly painted on Liza's face. It lasted but a moment, and was, fortunately, unperceived by Laudomia, for her sister, more to deceive herself than her, (at least, for her honor we cannot help hoping so,) as soon as this first moment of mingled emotion had passed, was lavish in her caresses and expressions of delight, and making every effort to persuade herself that she felt the greatest interest in the happiness of the lovers, that she was above all things delighted with this connection, she succeeded at length in appearing, and perhaps in being, sincere and natural in her demonstrations.

With two sisters, with any two girls, on such occasions, there is no lack of words, and here they were abundant. Both were full of projects, of designs, of arrangements for the future, but we will not repeat them, for the excellent reason, that it would be tedious to the reader to read them, and to us to write them.

At last, there was an end to the rejoicings and embracings, and Laudomia had but just left the room, when Troilo, who had returned home, entered it. Any one who had seen him as he ascended the stairs, would have said, this man is engaged in a work that is anything but agreeable to him. He went up slowly, loitering on every step, with a listless, discontented air, dragging after him a huge halberd, of which, as he held it, grasped by the upper part, near the battle axe, the other end came thumping along the edge of every step. Arrived at

the landing, he relieved himself by a prolonged whew! and with eyebrows strained up, as if utterly weary, eyes on the ground and head on one side, he began to whistle to himself as he hung up the halberd on a nail beside his chamber-door, and taking off the shield he wore upon his arm, he attempted to rest it against the wall, but it slipped and came to the floor; he did not, however, stoop to take it up, but entered the room where Liza was sitting, trying to assume as pleasant an aspect as possible, internally saying to himself, "Cheer up, Troilo, take courage, all this tedium shall not be without reward!"

"I thought we went out to fight," said he, kissing Liza slightly on the forehead, "but it was only a review, and nothing new has occurred."

"Instead of which something new has taken place at home," answered Liza.

"What is it?"

"Lamberto marries Laudomia."

"Ah! eh! How? Oh! I am glad of it."

Then fixing his eye on Liza's face, and knowing exactly what her thoughts were, he added, delighted with an opportunity of gratifying his natural love of teasing:

"Indeed, that is fine! Really, I should not have guessed it. Who would have thought they would have fallen in love with each other? I should like to know if they have intended it for a long time."

Liza bit her lips, and shrugged her shoulders, and Troilo went on:

"Indeed, to tell you the truth, I am very glad, for this poor Alberto — Lamberto, I would say — he owes me a grudge — though I never had any thought of troubling him — however, I was the cause of disturbing him in his love — and no one more than I ought to feel compassion for him, for I know the value of the treasure of which I robbed him."

Here, finding that Liza's back was turned towards him, he ran out his tongue a finger's length, and then went on:

"Now, I thank God, that I see he is not utterly reduced to despair — and I am also glad on your account, my Liza. Do you know, with your good heart, he must have been a continual thorn — and now you must feel a great relief in seeing him happy, and in knowing that he has made so good a use of his reason, and has consoled himself."

"Oh! as to me, I am very much pleased," said Liza, dryly.

Troilo planted himself in front of her, and looking steadily into her face, said:

"Well now, judging from your face, you are anything but

pleased — perhaps something else has happened — something that has vexed you."

"I? — nothing has happened to me — I am the same as usual."

"Oh! not at all as usual, my Liza. Why don't you speak out plainly, and say, 'I don't wish to tell you:' for any one could see displeasure in your face, a mile off."

"But what cause of displeasure do you think I have, and with whom?"

"That is exactly what I am asking, for, by my life, I cannot guess — but, whatever it may be, it seems to me, that, at this moment, the pleasure of seeing your sister happy, and Lamberto consoled and satisfied, ought to make you forget every thing else."

Liza, at these words, the profound irony of which she felt, without daring to allow herself to give a direct reply, was seized by such a fit of impatience, that she stamped her foot upon the floor, and rose from her seat, repeating two or three times, "I tell you nothing is the matter with me!" and at last, like a petted child, she began to cry.

Troilo, who keenly enjoyed this scene, which, as we shall see, he turned to his own advantage, stared at her with a show of the greatest astonishment, saying:

"I don't understand what this means. But what ails you? What has happened to you!"

"Nothing ails me, nothing has happened to me, nothing at all, but you come here with such a peculiar expression, you look at me so strangely — and then, 'what ails you' — 'something certainly has happened to you,' — and 'you don't wish to tell me,' — you make me lose my temper entirely, — and it is very provoking."

"Provoking! that word pleases me, that is as much as to say, take yourself out of my way! If that is all you wish, we will soon be agreed."

So saying, he turned his back on the young woman, who instantly relented, and terrified at the idea of displeasing one she loved so much, rushed forward to detain him, but it was useless; Troilo, with a jerk, liberated the arm she had taken, and with four leaps found himself in the street.

This wretch had no sooner heard of the intended marriage of Lamberto, than he was filled with a desire to prevent it at all risks: for, should this be consummated, his designs upon Laudomia must fall to the ground at once, designs which had scarcely taken form in his own mind, knowing them to be exceedingly difficult of execution, and which he would probably be obliged

to renounce; but seeing her in the hands of another, gave new force to his wicked appetite; he resolved to compete the prize with Lamberto, and knowing there was no time to be lost, he profitted by the opportunity of getting up the quarrel with his wife just mentioned, in order that his quitting the house and leaving her so soon alone, might seem perfectly natural.

As he went along, he said to himself laughing, for he was not in the least angry, though he had pretended to be, "I would not have missed this love-quarrel for a florin! By my faith! it came just in the nick of time! Now, Messer Troilo, it is for you to turn it to good account! First of all, to find means to get rid of Lamberto! And how to do it? That is the question —"

Just then he thought of Nobili, and what he had said to him about the *buca* of S. Girolamo, and of the method of speaking to him secretly, and he thought he might make use of him. In a few minutes he was at the office of the above-mentioned confraternity, and introducing himself to one of the senior members, who being acquainted with Niccolò and his household, had heard what had taken place among them within a few days, he, without any difficulty, got his name inscribed among the members. He paid the small fee required for admission, and received the habit of the society, which he made into a small bundle, with which he set off with joy to return home.

In the meantime, Lamberto had returned with the other young men. He went up into his room and disarmed himself in haste. The time seeming interminable before he should find Laudomia, to whom, now confident and assured, he burned to unfold his heart, and make amends to himself for his long silence, and the pain and uncertainty he had suffered. He descended to the room below, not without bestowing a little more than ordinary care upon his person, that he might appear as well as possible, and he even, in certain moments we are all alike, in going out of the room, threw a fleeting glance at the mirror that was hanging on the wall, but instantly conscious of the womanish feeling, he smiled at himself and passed on.

On reaching Laudomia's door, he found it half open; he knocked very gently, calling her by name, his heart beating most violently, but, no one answering, he pushed open the door and entered the room; it was empty.

Though he had often been there before, it seemed to him that he now entered it for the first time. A slight shiver, such as he never felt before, ran through his veins, and he stood for

a moment looking around the room, and upon the furniture so brightly polished and so elegantly arranged, — mute witness of the correct taste and orderly habits of its fair occupant.

The air of the apartment was perfumed with the odor of the flowers which adorned the image of the Virgin, and the fragrance of the snow-white linen which covered the bed.

The daylight, for it was now growing dusk, fell languidly on the pavement beneath the windows, and its azure tint was becoming lost in the reddish glow diffused by the lamp that was burning over the Prie-Dieu.

Lamberto, drawing near, fixed his eyes upon that Madonna, whose beauty never before had seemed to him so divine. He observed more minutely this sanctuary, so to say, of his Laudomia, the flowers, the books of devotion, the cushions still bearing the impress of her loved form. All these things, mute and lifeless as they would have been to any other person, had for him, at this moment, a sense and voice, which sweetly, and, at the same time powerfully, descended into his inmost soul.

All immersed in his impassioned thoughts, Lamberto, almost unconsciously, dropped on his knees before the image, resting one arm on the cushion, on which he leaned his forehead. The too rapid and violent palpitations of his heart, became gradually tranquilized and lost in an indefinable and placid quiescence of the intellect, when he felt a hand placed upon his shoulder, and the sweet voice of Laudomia sounded in his ear :

“ You here, Lamberto ? For whom are you praying ? ”

The young man raised his head and turned round, and what he felt at that moment as he met the look of those tearful eyes, so kindly bent upon him, may be imagined, but cannot be expressed. Without changing his place, he took Laudomia's hand between both his own, he pressed it to his lips, trembling with emotion, and said :

“ I came to pray to you, Laudomia, and what the prayer is, and with what feelings I offer it, you well know.”

“ Yes, I know it,” said the maiden, but her eyes gave a fuller, sweeter answer ; without adding another word, she knelt down at the side of Lamberto, who still held her hand, and fixing her eyes upon the countenance of Our Lady, after a brief silence, she said :

“ Oh ! Maria, rather let me die than ever lose the heart of my Lamberto ! ”

Both remained silent, for, at that moment, speech was impossible and unnecessary, between two hearts transfused at once

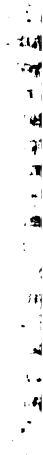
into each other, with the rapidity of two flames brought into contact.

When, after a long pause, both recovered the faculties of speech and discernment, Laudomia, unable to support herself longer in a kneeling posture, sank on a chair that stood near. Her glances veiled with a chaste, but impassioned languor, fell slowly and tenderly on her lover, who was still kneeling at her feet, as she told him of her happiness, with all the ingenuous and trusting sincerity of innocent love.

Both seemed to themselves born into a new life; to find themselves in another world, I had almost said to have changed nature and essence. There was now no memory of the past, no fear for the future. There was a mutual understanding without the aid of speech, and, at the same time, a necessity for speaking, and of asking the one of the other, from time to time, "But is not all this a dream? is it indeed true?" And, meanwhile, the white hand of Laudomia, shrinking from the too ardent kisses of her lover, was placed on his forehead, making feeble efforts to keep him at a distance.

Then, as they gradually arranged their ideas, and connected the thoughts and events of their past lives, with their present felicity, they remembered the numberless follies of their childhood, the thoughts and emotions of their early youth, — they asked and gave explanations of words hitherto obscure, of looks and signs, and a hundred such minutiae, that had occurred many years back, but which were still living and present in the memory of the heart. In these outpourings of the soul, Lamberto mingled with every phrase the sweetest names of love, with which he addressed Laudomia in numberless ways, — names which we must not repeat, profaned and made ridiculous as they have been by Arcadian poets (peace to their memory) and by fools, but which, however, are not the less a necessity, a vent to the overcharged heart, when it feels more than ordinary language can express.

"Oh! my Laudomia," said the young man, "my sweet, my only thought; you now make me sensible of my past mistake — I, who believed I knew what love was! Oh! I never thought to arrive at so much — only an hour ago, I was distressed to think I could ever have turned my thoughts to Liza — It seemed to me, I had done too much wrong to my love for you — which I now see was the first, the only one worthy of the name — now I know, that when I thought I loved another, it was not so — Oh! how much this thought consoles me! It was not true! I never loved any but you, with that



CHAPTER XXII.

DURING this secret colloquy, it had become dark night, and the chamber, lighted only by the faint gleam of the lamp, was in a state of semi-obscurity, which, at any other time, would have reminded the young people of the necessity of providing more light, but at *this* moment, they did not observe it.

The family had already assembled in Niccolò's room on the lower floor, for the evening devotions, and missing Lamberto and Laudomia, Vieri went to the foot of the stairs to call them; his voice made itself heard — for it resounded through the whole house, — but not by the ears of the two who were called, who perceived nothing of it, and Vieri, giving himself no further trouble about them, returned to the fireside with the others, while Lamberto went on saying:

“Oh! dearest, you know not how I have been tormented by these fancies — and now, I will tell you all — for there ought to be nothing in me, which is hidden from you.

And here he told of Selvaggia, of the place which she yet held in his memory, of the pity he still felt for her, and as he spoke, he watched attentively and timorously, the impression which his words produced on the countenance of Laudomia. When there was nothing more to add, he said, “Now, you know all, my love. Was I right in deeming myself unworthy of your heavenly love? Do I still seem to you worthy of a single thought? Oh! delay not to answer me, my Laudomia!”

And he waited with the anxiety of a culprit, who expects to hear the sentence of death.

The light cloud which, for a moment, had over-shadowed the face of Laudomia cleared up, while, with a gentle sigh, ‘occasioned perhaps by the conviction that Lamberto's heart had not always been here alone,’ she answered:

“Tell me, dearest, if that woman had not been thus degraded, and you *could* have loved her without shame, *would* you have loved her better than your Laudomia.”

Lamberto thrust his hands through his hair, he could not

of it. But the future! Oh! Lamb's

And here, joining her hands in the
she said:

"You see, Lamberto, I am a tier
wholly to your love; possessing th
courage through every event of the
counter in these times of strife and
fortune shall make me such, that ;
me: this have I promised to God an
shall know how to maintain — for I
woman, born of a free people, and
But, Lamberto, one thing I beg of
else — I feel that I could be strong
tune, but against *that* — Oh! no, *the*
life of us women is all in the heart, y
not a pastime — not a relief from
which you now offer me, is hencefo
sole thought, you will not rob me of
live." What the young man felt, at
he could only express by numberless
hand which, now abandoned between h
his caress. After a little while, raisin
his bosom his mother's letter, which
him; he gave it to Landomia, who rei
of tenderness; then, taking the letter

"You see how my mother loved you
me at her last hour: now, then, hear
as I

At length she was raised to heaven with that look of paradise, which sometimes awakes to life under the graceful pencil of Guido Reni.

She remained thus for a moment, and then the thought of Selvaggia arose in her mind; she had been touched by her remorse, her misery; she wished to hear more of her story, and at last she said, almost in consternation:

"Oh! poor young creature, — what wretches there are in this world — and what horrible things take place in it! what has this unhappy being not suffered, and what must she not probably have yet to suffer! Oh! to love *you*, dearest, and without shadow of hope, it must be horrible! But, at least, one might learn where she is, carry her consolation, make her experience the sweetness, if not of love, of affection and friendship.

"Where she now is, God alone knows. I would not say it to every one; but to you I can tell everything, but I am persuaded she will not lose trace of me. For, if I did not return her love, I at least spoke to her with respect, and when I showed compassion for her, accustomed as she was to meet with nothing but insult and mockery, she felt, that for once she had met a being with the lineaments and the feelings of humanity.

"Oh, how glad I should be to find her! I am so constituted, you see, that, to know that my felicity renders a poor creature so unhappy, oppresses my heart. I feel as if I must in some way ask her forgiveness — as if I ought to make her some atonement. Oh! Lamberto, let us find her. I will be her friend. She shall no longer say, that not one in the world has ever wished her well."

"There is not an angel like you, even in paradise," said Lamberto, completely overcome by his feelings, and on the forehead of Landomia, smooth and pure as the breast of a dove, he impressed the first kiss of love.

By this time, Nicolo, seeing that Lamberto and Landomia did not make their appearance, had suspected what was passing, and, to satisfy himself, he called back Vieri, who was on the point of calling them again, preferring to go for them himself. He ascended the stairs, and, pulling Landomia's door ajar, entered without being heard, and arrived just in time to hear these last words, and witness this act of Lamberto.

The good old man was so delighted to see the fulfilment of his highest hopes, that, contrary to his nature, he really felt inclined to joke a little, and he first made the young people sensible of his presence, by repeating the words of Lamberto in his last conversation with him:

"Oh, I do not deserve her love; I am not worthy of the

love of that angel. Poor Lamberto, even I begin to suspect you were mistaken."

Then, resuming his usual manner, though full of the sweetest tenderness, he folded in his arms the two young people, who smiling and blushing, had started upon their feet, and then embracing them, he drew them both towards the picture of the Virgin, and, making them kneel, placed his hands upon their heads, saying :

"Oh! my children, you who have ever been good and obedient, you who are the delight and the honor of my old age, receive my blessing! Blessed be your love, blessed be your children, and your children's children. When I shall be no longer with you, — and that time will soon come, — remember Niccolò, your father, — remember the love he bore you, the benediction he has pronounced upon you this day, and, if you wish God to confirm it from heaven, love each other always as you now love, — but, first of all, love God and your country, and thus will you be permitted to be forever re-united in heaven."

He was silent, and neither Lamberto nor Laudomia uttered a word, impressed as they were with a sense of religious solemnity, and tender gratitude for what they had just heard.

Niccolò was the first to move, saying :

"Now let us go down, for we are waited for." And together they descended into his room, where the other members of the family, who had just heard from Liza what was going on, smilingly observed a brighter tint than usual on Laudomia's cheek, and on Lamberto's habitually serious face a most expansive effusion of delight, and, what seemed still more strange, an equally joyous expression on that of Niccolò.

During the absence of Niccolò, the friends who usually composed their evening party had made their appearance, and Fanfulla, among the others, who, from this time forth, was to use a familiar Italian expression) as much a part of the house as the broom.

Niccolò announced to the company the news of the intended match, and then followed embracings, congratulations, good wishes, in short, all the demonstrations usual on such occasions. The betrothal was fixed for the next evening, in the church of S. Marco, according to the old Florentine custom, for, to the lovers as well as to the father, there seemed no occasion for further delay. All present were invited to a little entertainment, which would be given after returning from church; not such, Niccolò said, as he could have wished to give on such an occasion, but such as the present calamity would allow.

Turning to Fra Benedetto da Faenza, he prayed him to consecrate this marriage, which would take place within three days in the same church.

"Liza, what has become of Troilo, that he is not here this evening?" said Niccolò to his daughter, who was working at a table, a little apart from the rest.

Liza answered that he had, that day, joined the *buca* of S. Girolamo, that he had gone thither, and would not be at home until late.

"Very well," said Niccolò, who, at this moment, was not disposed to listen to suspicions, or evil interpretations, and, enjoying the pleasure of finding himself among those so dear to him, thought no more of Troilo, nor of any one else, and so passed the evening.

Troilo, however, thought quite enough of them.

Returning home, with his little bundle, he had made up the quarrel with his wife, who, poor thing, had remained in the greatest trouble and consternation, throwing upon herself all the blame of this dispute, the first which had ever arisen between them since they had been together. He waited until it was dark, and then, putting on the dress of the fraternity, he set forth towards Porta S. Gallo, where was the chapel of this association. Arrived there, and making himself known to the *ancient* on guard, he was admitted, and descended, by a long flight of steps, into a small church, which, being under ground, was called *buca*.* He found himself beneath a vaulted roof, low and long, divided crosswise by huge supports of unhewn stone, blackened by the smoke of torches. The pavement of broad, flat stones, was sown with graves, on which were sculptured the effigies of warriors and citizens, in monastic dress, the bas-reliefs of which were worn almost smooth by the tread of feet.

On the altar, at the extremity of the room, a few candles were burning before a picture of S. Girolamo, which was painted in the antique style, richly ornamented with gilding and carving, while a great many votive offerings, which, according to the usage of the times, consisted of large-sized dolls, or puppets, representing to the life the figures of the devout of both sexes, in their ordinary dress, suspended from the ceiling, languished in the empty air. This aerial population, similar in all respects, except in locomotion, to that on foot beneath them, had a singular effect, and, seen in a dark mass, against the bright gleam from the altar, seemed like phantoms evoked

* *Buca*, a hole or sepulchre.

from the underlying tombs. Deep, nasal, drawling voices were chanting the canonical hours behind the altar, and throughout the church, kneeling close to the wall against a wooden railing, numbers of brethren were praying, clothed in the monastic garb, with the cowl drawn over their eyes. To Troilo, accustomed to balls, suppers and amusements of every kind, and who had never been in church ten times in his life, it seemed indeed, that, in coming here, he had descended into a tomb. He advanced, taking care not to slip, for the pavement was covered with a damp mould like that of a cellar, and then, stopping short, he looked around, saying to himself:

"To think, that to get into paradise, one must go through such byways as these! Patience! You will have need of it, Messer Troilo! Ah! Baccio, *dog!* We shall meet again, please God! And now, how is one to recognize this poltroon of a Messer Benedetto, in the midst of this company of scoundrels? Let me look about a little. Is it that fellow squatting there, who looks as if he were hatching eggs? Yes, the simpletons! — but *he* is taller — Oh! this other there, who rears up his back like a battle-horse! It is he, without doubt."

Approaching this man, he knelt at his side, and having given and received the sign agreed upon between them, he found he was right, and they began to talk together in a low tone. Troilo, to make sure of his object as soon as possible, came directly to the point, and, without further preamble, he told Messer Benedetto that he had made up his mind to leave Florence, for that this place was such a bore to him, he should not be alive at the end of a week, and that he wished him, therefore, to give Messer Baccio warning of his intention, as he was determined to go at any rate.

To the representations of Benedetto, who said everything he could think of, to induce him to change his purpose, he feigned to turn a deaf ear, but let fall the remark, that he might be induced to remain on one condition. To this Benedetto quickly replied, "Whatever it may be, if it is a possible thing, it shall be done."

"Well, then," said Troilo, "hear what I have to say. You must manage it by some means or other with Signor Malatesta, that between now and to-morrow, Lamberto, that man-at-arms, who lodges in Niccolò's house, shall be sent out of Florence, with some of the provincial troops, or wherever you will, it matters little to me, provided he is taken out of my way."

"If that is all, my son, it shall soon be done," said Nobili, who thought he had got off very cheaply.

"On the whole, it occurs to me, that, seeing we are disguised

in this way, we might as well go together to Malatesta's, as soon as the service is over. Now be silent, and retire a little aside, so as not to excite suspicion."

Troilo, perfectly satisfied, laughed in his heart at the foolishness of this man, in believing that he had any intention of relinquishing an undertaking, in which, on the contrary, he began to feel quite an interest, and, withdrawing to a little distance, he covered his face with both hands, pretending to pray, but, in reality, revolving his own wicked plans.

He passed thus a couple of hours, which, from his uncomfortable position, and the pain in his knee-pans, which now, for the first time, bore his whole weight, seemed to him, at least, long. At last, he perceived that the candles of the altar were, one by one, extinguished. He raised his head, and, seeing the last flame disappear under the extinguisher, was left in almost utter darkness, for there remained only, behind the altar, a small lamp which gave a very faint light.

He became aware, then, of a shadow, which, passing along the wall of the vault, stopped before each brother, appearing to hand him something. Troilo could not see what, and he moved nearer to Messer Benedetto to ask him what it meant; but, just then, the man who was going the rounds reached him, and put into his hands a certain something of wood, about two spans long; it was so dark he could not see what it was, but, groping over it, and feeling certain knotted cords which hung from one of its ends, he perceived that he had between his hands, a scourge.

He was on the point of throwing it at the back of the man who had made him a present of it, but he checked himself, and Sobili, who kept his eye upon him, said, "Do as I do." Troilo looked at him, and saw him take off one by one all the clothing he had on above his girdle; then, with arms and shoulders bare, he took the scourge and began to beat himself, as may be believed with more noise than detriment, and all the other brethren did the same, reciting, at the same time, the *Miserere*.

Troilo felt so vexed at being caught in such a trap, of which Messer Benedetto had not given him the least hint, that, taking the scourge, without removing any of his clothing, he began to strike madly about him upon the walls and benches, and two of his heaviest strokes lighted upon the shoulders of Messer Benedetto, who soon learnt the difference between scourging by his own hand, and that of another. The pain made him cry out like a viper; but Troilo, laughing in his sleeve, excused himself, alleging as the cause of the accident, the darkness and want of practice in such exercises.

At last, towards midnight, an end being put to the church service and the disciplinary process, the brethren began to go out one by one, and when the church was cleared, our two knaves re-ascended also into the street, and took their way to the palace of Malatesta, at the Renajo dei Serristori.

Since it is our privilege to accomplish in one instant, and one leap, a journey which cost them many steps, and at least half hour's time, we will, with our reader, precede them their way, and place ourselves while waiting for them, in a certain little room on the lower floor, from which, by a secret staircase, one could communicate with the sleeping apartment of Malatesta, and which was occupied by Master Barlaam, his physician and astrologer, whom we hope our reader has not forgotten, though we have said nothing about him for some time. A new guest, who has already figured in our story, had presented herself twenty-four hours before in these quarters; but, before occupying ourselves with her present affairs, it will be necessary to fill up the blank which we have left in the story of her past adventures.

When Selvaggia, from the prow of the galley of Don Ugo di Moncada, where she was fighting to defend Lamberto, was pushed, wounded and exhausted, headlong into the sea the reader has doubtless recognized her in that soldier of the morion), after the first sensation of the coldness of the water, she felt nothing more; she lost memory and consciousness, and when she came to herself and found she was shut up in a place, dark, close and fetid, stretched upon straw amidst a heap of dead and dying, she thought she had left this world, and had entered upon the terrible future of the unblessed; but, gradually collecting her mental powers, and hearing the tramp of footsteps overhead, and the sound of regular and prolonged strokes, produced by the rise and fall of the oars, she perceived that she was in the hold of a galley, and the memory of the recent battle returning to her mind, forgetting her present state, her wounds, and the intense pain she was suffering, her thoughts flew to Lamberto, and she said with a sigh:

"Oh! they must have killed him!" The iron nature of this woman could not stand against such a thought; poor young creature, she began to weep like a child. After weeping some time, she said to herself in a moment of terrible desperation:

"Oh! how cruel, how crafty must be that demon who, from my very birth, has been incensed against me, and has pursued me everywhere! — in peace — in war, even in the depths of the sea, there is no way of escaping him! But I did wish to

"e this time! Did I ask so much? To die! but for Lamberto, to save his life. Oh! yes, that was it; but that was too much joy for Selvaggia! A joy! it would be one indeed! but I am not to feel it,—never, never. But who am I?" she said at length, in an uncontrollable paroxysm of weeping, "Who am I? Am I a serpent, a beast of prey? What have I done before my birth? What crime have I committed? Did I ask thee to place me in this world, Oh! terrible God, who hast created me?"

This tremendous mental agitation, increasing the physical sufferings of Selvaggia, threw her into her former state of insensibility, and she remained in it, utterly unconscious of herself and of her sufferings, heaven knows how long.

Returning at length to consciousness, she saw a capuchin kneeling at her side, who was bathing her temples with vinegar. She tried some time to speak, then, with difficulty making her words intelligible, she asked:

"Where are we?"

"On board the *Santa Marta*, my son," answered the good friar, "in the waters of M. Cristo, bound straight for Gaeta."

"Oh! tell me," said she, anxiously, trying to raise her head, "of the Spanish admiral's galley, on which the battle was going, when I was overthrown into the sea!"

"It went to the bottom, my son: God have mercy on so many poor souls!"

"And he, Lamberto, that brave young man? He who alone led so many. Oh! tell me, what became of him?"

"What is it you wish to know? I know not of whom you wish me to speak, there are so many dead! What I can tell you is, that the galley fell over on its side, and a cannon shot at it to the bottom; for, before you could say an Ave Maria, the banner of Spain, which floated from the mainmast, disappeared beneath the waves."

"Oh! they have killed him!" twice repeated the unhappy woman, in feeble, but earnest tones, and then she became mute and immovable, without appearing to hear or heed the consolations or the kindly services of the good Frate.

Upon the arrival of the galley at Gaeta, then in the possession of the French, the wounded were put on shore, Selvaggia among the rest, and crowded into several of the filthy, unwholesome warehouses on the wharves.

If the reader has ever seen—and if he has not, the better for him; a military hospital in time of war, if his foot has ever trod the crumbled and fetid straw, which serves as bed to hundreds of wounded, immersed in all the filth of the most

squalid misery, he may have some idea of the place to which this poor woman was consigned, calculating, too, that three hundred years ago, such hospitals were much worse than present.

It would seem that nature, in forming certain human beings predestined to suffering, had been careful (more cruel, perhaps than provident) to fortify them with a constitution capable of indefinite endurance; in the same manner as the shipbuilder overlays and strengthens the sides of the ships destined to encounter the storms and ice of the polar regions.

Such a constitution had been given to Selvaggia, and the state of disease, suffering and hardship in which she languished for more than a year, was not sufficient to overcome her vital tenacity. After some months, her wounds even then not wholly closed, she was lifted (for she could not bear her weight) from the straw of the hospital, to give place to other wounded, and left on the pavement in the street, where she must have perished with hunger, if some charitable person had not taken her in and administered to her wants, until, with great difficulty, and after a long space of time, she was partially restored to health and strength.

So long as she felt certain that she could not recover, the idea of dying without seeing Lamberto again, without knowing any more of his fate, rendered her illness much more serious and alarming, but she no sooner felt a little returning strength, no sooner felt a little life reviving in her heart, than she began to hope that he had not fallen in battle, that she might meet him again, and this hope had for her more virtue than any medicine.

Much as she sought to inform herself by means of the soldiers or travellers who passed through Gaeta, she had never been able to get a word that could relieve her from her uncertainty, or that could give her the least indication of his fate; and when she met a new-comer, and, after questioning him, found her hopes still deluded, the poor creature would exclaim with a sigh, "They must have killed him!"

At length, feeling herself sufficiently strong, she one morning took leave of those who had so kindly succored her, and alone, on foot, with a staff for her support, and no other earthly goods than the small quantity of bread she could take with her, and a little money given her by her benefactors, she courageously took the road to Rome. She had heard of the siege that was strictly maintained about Florence. "If he is living, he will be there in person," she said; "if he is not there, it will be a token that I may as well die; but, at least, I will die where he

was born, on the door-step of his house. This consolation they will at least leave me. Oh! God, let me not meet any one who will recognize me, and say, 'That woman is Selvaggia, the courtesan,' for then I should, perhaps, be driven away."

Immersed in such thoughts, and continually varying her suppositions and her projects, she journeyed on, silent and alone. The first two days she travelled many miles, then her wounds began anew to pain her, and she was obliged to rest longer and more frequently. She passed Terracina, the marshes, the hills of Velletri and Albano, drenched by the autumnal rains, exhausted with weariness, her limbs racked with pain, but always sustained by hope, borne along by her intense desire to reach Florence, where she thought her long and painful state of uncertainty must find an end. After ten days travel, she entered Rome, one evening, through the gate of Giovanni. She remained there several days, to recover a little strength, and then, resuming her journey, she passed through Viterbo, Radicofani and Siena, and in a month's time after leaving Gaeta, arrived at the gates of Florence.

Entering by the gate of S. Gallo, she had been obliged to quit the direct route, and make a circuit, in order to avoid the imperial army. She threw herself down under the arch of the gateway, not so much to repose herself, for her iron constitution was rather invigorated than exhausted by the fatigues of the journey, as to think in what way she should be able to find Lamberto, for, in a city so vast, in which she had never been before, full of so many soldiers and resident citizens, she knew this would be no easy matter. "He is a soldier," she thought to herself, "and if I make inquiry of the commander of the soldiery, I shall be able to discover him." Entering into conversation with some of the custom-house officers, she was told that the captain of the Florentines was the Signor Baglioni Malatesta, a nobleman of Perugia.

She started at the sound of this name, and with reason, as we shall see hereafter. She reflected a few moments; at last she said, "He will have my father with him! My father here? — and I may see him in a few moments!"

For a time she seemed to be wrestling with herself, then all at once, rising with an air of resolution, she said, "Perhaps it will be best for me. I will go." And, inquiring the way from one and another, she arrived, after dark, at the hall door of the Serristori.

Master Barlaam was at this time alone in his study, or office, as we ought rather to call it, being the place where, with the aid of two furnaces and a great quantity of pots, vials, stills

and retorts, he compounded remedies and distilled water which bolstered up, or were intended so to do, the vacillating health of his master. The meagre, miserable carcass of the Jew was wrapped in the classic dressing-gown, or loose robe of faded velvet, lined with furs, without which, thanks to the painters and historians, who have preceded us, it is impossible to figure to ourselves the alchemist.

He had all the vices of that long-persecuted race, and, at the same time, all those gifts, I might almost say virtues, which nature concedes to them, by means of which, they are not wholly without defence against their oppressors: avaricious, crafty, incapable, whatever might be the occasion, or whoever the object, of the least sensation of pity or compassion; he knew no other love than that of self, no other aim, than his own interest. But this very concentration of all his moral faculties in the narrow periphery of self-hood, had gifted him with an admirable rapidity of conception in ordering his designs, an imperturbable tenacity in prosecuting them, and a calculating, hypocritical and persevering prudence in making subservient to his own ends, those with whom he had to do. His mind, cold but lucid, might be compared to a chess-board, on which the moves are rare and deliberate, the result of an impenetrable and fixed purpose.

In times when the luxuries, conveniences, and even the security of life, were, for most, the result of birth, of physical courage and material force, he, destitute of all these gifts, the son of a despised and accursed race, had been able, by his ingenuity and cunning, to procure to himself all these advantages, which would have been refused to him by every other avenue in the social condition of the time. He had been able to overreach Malatesta, and in the shadow of his power he lived, basely, it is true, but rich and secure. One moment of passion, one caprice of his master, might, however, deprive him of everything, even life itself, for the Jew well knew that he was not loved, and that Malatesta treated him with courtesy and kindness solely because he believed he could not do without him.

He knew that Malatesta was suspicious, terrible in his wrath, and, above all, implacable in his vengeance, and it was the continued study of his life, to keep sound and whole the threads of the net in which he had entangled him, and, at the same time, to prevent him from seeing this, and inspire him with the belief, that he possessed in him a loyal and affectionate servant, who was incapable of dissimulation or treachery.

As he was sitting at a table, reading an Averoe manuscript,

in parchment, by the light of a small lamp, the tapestry of the door, which led into the court-yard, was raised, and, a soldier entering, said :

" Master, there is a young person without, asking for you."

And, before the old man had time to answer, Selvaggia appeared, stopped on the threshold, and the soldier went away about his own business.

" Who are you ?" said Barlaam, drawing his eyelids together, and, putting his withered hand between his eyes and the little flame of the lamp, the better to see who had entered so boldly, without permission.

For a moment, Selvaggia hesitated to answer. She felt inexpressible indignation at the sight of him who had been the first, the wicked origin, of all her misfortunes.

Then, slowly advancing, and resting her hands upon the table, she gave him an opportunity to look at her for a moment, then, with a bitter smile, she said :

" My appearance is changed, eh ? since you saw me : and, with my present looks, I should be a drug in the market."

The old man then recognized her, but, without betraying, in voice, look, or manner, the least indication of the impression which this unexpected apparition produced upon him, he said, with impassible tranquillity :

" Ah ! is it you, Selvaggia ?"

Then, touched by the cold indifference of the wretch, the young woman raised her head, crossed her arms upon her breast, and, in a resolute tone and manner, said :

" Yes, it is I. Now, listen to me, Master Barlaam : in all the days, in all the by-gone hours, in those years which have passed since that moment, when you left me alone that night, in that room with him — has the thought never arisen in your mind, ' God gave me a daughter, what have I done with her ? ' Have you never been roused in your sleep by her image ? Have you not seen her dishonored, mocked, covered with out-cast, wandering from land to land ? Has the thought never occurred to you, perhaps she is naked, hungry ; perhaps she lies ill, and has not one to bring her a draught of water ? Who will aid her ? Tell me, have you never known one moment of remorse, thinking of her unmerited sufferings, through your agency ?"

Selvaggia was silent for a moment, awaiting an answer, but seeing her father immovable and impassible, with his eyes on his manuscript, without showing any intention of speaking, she continued, with increasing passion :

" And think you that this misery, and the woes I have

enumerated, have been the worst, and the only evils? the supposition never occurred to you, that this unholy wretch, whom you condemned to crime, to shame, might, haps, have received from nature a soul that spurned dishonour, heart capable of virtue and love, — that this love might day become as necessary for her as the air she breathes, — it might become her incessant thought, her life, her only perpetual desire, — that, finding herself, through your age incapable, unworthy of obtaining it, she might die, despair and cursing you? Tell me, have you never thought of this? Move — answer me — by Heaven!" she cried, madly, striking the table with her clenched fist.

"I believe that you are possessed with a devil!" said the master, drawing back his chair, and half suspicious that she meant to take his life.

However, pretending the most entire serenity, he continued:

"Tell me, rather, Selvaggia, who you think you are? The daughter of a prince? Do you not know that you were born in the land of Christians, of a Hebrew beggar? That lords and rich men have more esteem for their dogs, than for the daughters of our race? That this shame you are talking about, you could not avoid, for you were destined to it from your mother's womb? And it was in order that you might live in ease, that I gave you to one who could make you rich and happy? And if you did not know how to govern yourself accordingly, and caused yourself to be driven away, how am I to blame for it? And why do you come here, raising such a din with these trifling notions, and this uproar?"

"Who told you that I must live in ease? Who asked treasures of you? Is there no other good than gold in this world?"

"Well, Selvaggia, if you continue to play the mad-woman in this way, with one whistle I can summon four soldiers, who will put you into the street, and when I tell them that I know not who you are, I shall have said all. If, on the contrary, you choose to take the proper course; if you — need — money," — and a much slower enunciation of this last phrase showed how much it cost the old miser.

"I did not come here for money," Selvaggia continued, shouting, showing, in her voice and looks, a still increasing degree of excitement, "I came here because I have hell in my heart; because I cannot live without *him*; because I will see him at any rate; because I hope yet, before I die, to find one heart that will not be steeled against me. Love! Oh! I know it!"

ot for poor Selvaggia ! But, a little affection — Oh ! I shall obtain it, if I find Lamberto."

"Oh ! in short," said Barlaam, resolutely, and extending his hand towards an ebony whistle that lay upon the table, "I do not understand you."

Selvaggia caught his hand, and, suddenly changing her almost ferocious expression, said, with a cold and sinister irony :

"You do not understand me ? Wait one moment, till I speak to you in a language that you will understand. If your memory serve you, (and see that it does, for it concerns your well-being,) you will remember, that before you sold me to that man, in the castle del Friuli, you had promised me to Malatesta, then a soldier in the Venetian service ; he was in his beginnings, and not over rich, and the price he could give you was less than that offered by the other ; therefore, you gave me to the other, making Malatesta believe that I was carried off by some soldiers. You did not believe I knew so much, eh ? You will now say, that I have no proofs to convince him of your deception ; but there you are mistaken. In haste, and fearful lest such an advantageous bargain should slip through your hands, you wrote a letter to my purchaser, telling him how things stood, and requesting him to keep me concealed, until Malatesta and his company had left that part of the country, and he did so. Malatesta knew nothing, suspected nothing of all this, and, afterwards, elevated in rank and fortune, took you into his service, and made you rich as you are at present. This letter, while living free and unrestrained in this man's house, I one day found, and it seemed to me to be worth preserving ; not thinking, however, that the time would come, when it would be of so *much* service to me. I have it with me, Maestro ; and, lest you should think it an empty boast, I will show it to you."

So saying, she drew the letter from her bosom, and opened it before the eyes of the old man, who was terrified at the sight.

He well knew that Malatesta was not a man to pardon a trick like that, should it come to his knowledge.

"Maestro Barlaam," said Selvaggia, dropping his hand, which she had held clutched all this time, "now call your soldiers, and drive me away ; I will not hinder you any longer. Have you changed your intention ? Have you understood me *this* time ?"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE crafty old man, finding himself caught in a net of his own weaving, still retained his presence of mind, and where strength could not avail him, he thought cunning would. He tried to clothe, with an appearance of sad, humble tenderness, his ugly face, which only became doubly hideous, and, looking at Selvaggia, he said, shaking his head :

"Yes, I understand you ; go then — go to Malatesta — show him that letter — let him snatch from me my little remnant of life — you have come for nothing else — you wish to make yourself mistress of the little I have been able to scrape together, in so many years of toil. You desire my death. I deserved it — my crime was too enormous. I tried to raise you from your rags — to make you live rich and happy, in a splendid station. Oh ! I deserved death ! Oh ! daughter !" he said, rising, and stretching out his arms towards Selvaggia. "is this, then, what you have prepared for your unhappy father ?"

"You, my father ?" said Selvaggia, retreating and smiling bitterly ; "Master, you did not understand me a little while ago, now I do not understand you."

"You do not understand me, wretch, do you not hear the voice of blood ?"

"There is a voice of blood between us ; but it does not suit me to listen to it with you. This voice will tell you, through this letter, that your blood is mine. Do you understand ? My blood is that of Master Barlaam, not that of my father ; for I alone, among the living, never had a father. But re-assure yourself. I came not here to shed your blood. I seek not your ruin — keep your treasures ; at the price at which they have been acquired, they are indeed your own. Sit down and listen to me. Two years ago, I met a young man, an angel, the only one who ever made me quail ; and the only thing which could make me endure life, was the hope of meeting him again, this true man. But why do I attempt to speak of him to you now," she said, impatiently, feeling

speaking of Lamberto to Master Barlaam, the same repugnance which Lamberto experienced on another occasion, upon hearing the idol of his love named by her.

"In a word," she continued, "I came to Florence in search of him. All I want of you, is to assist me in tracing him out; when I have found him, I leave you, and you will hear no more of me or my affairs. These are my conditions, Maestro!"

At these words, the old man breathed more freely; he seemed to have her, as the saying is, for a bit of bread. As his mock tenderness had become useless, he resumed his stony visage, and said:

"I will very willingly assist you as much as I can, if that is all you want. Tell me this man's name, who is he?"

Selvaggia, briefly as possible, gave her father the name, appearance, and rank of Lamberto, which he carefully noted down upon a scrap of paper, then giving his daughter a little silver, he dismissed her, telling her to come the next day, and in the meantime he would attend to her commission.

She came twice in the course of the next day, and a third time late in the evening, but Barlaam had as yet learnt nothing. "The city is full of soldiers, it will take time — I have sent to all the captains — if he is here, he will be found, but one cannot work miracles," he said to the young woman to calm her impatience.

In the meantime, Troilo and Messer Benedetto, whom we left on the road, had arrived at the Serristori palace, and being denied admission to Malatesta, who at that hour would see no one, Nobili said:

"Let's go and see the Maestro, it will be all the same, the thing is a matter of such slight importance. Let him say one word to Malatesta, and it will be done."

So saying, he turned towards the apartments of Barlaam, with which he was well acquainted. They entered, (having first taken off the habits of the fraternity, and thrown them in a corner,) and found the old man with Selvaggia, whom, dressed as a soldier, they did not recognize for a woman, but supposed to be one of the servants of the house.

"Good day, Maestro," said Nobili, with a certain authoritative air, and the Jew answered his salutation in the most humble manner, as he was accustomed to do with every one, and particularly with those, whom he knew to be in favor with his master.

"We are come to ask a favor of you," continued the former, — this gentleman, — he is the same who came disguised as a

monk, — from our people, — from those in the camp, — recollect?" The Hebrew nodded in the affirmative.

"He then, in an affair of his own, and I, just for comp~~an~~ wished to speak with Malatesta, but we have just been told at this hour, he admits no visitors. Would you be willing to serve us by going up to him and making known to him our request, — which this young man and I beseech him to grant, — it is a mere trifle, — it will cost him nothing but his assent. It is, that a certain man-at-arms here, in the company of Amice d'Arsoli, shall be sent away with some of the country troops, — and the reason why we make this request, we will explain to him when we are together."

"And what is the name of this soldier," asked Barlaam, preparing to go, and showing by the expression of his face that it would not be difficult to obtain what they wanted.

"It is the same man who has been brought up in Niccolò's family from a child, — who was at one time in the *Bande Nere* with Signor Giovanni, and now is to marry Laudomia, — that is, if he can find the opportunity," (here he gave a significant glance at Troilo,) "he is that Lamberto, you know very well."

"Ah!" said the Maestro, "I understand," and went out.

Troilo and Nobili, who were solely occupied with him, did not observe the gesture of surprise and joy which Selvaggia made, on hearing the name of him she had searched for so long and unsuccessfully.

But, repressing her first emotion, of what had just been said, only one phrase remained present to her mind. "now he is to marry Laudomia." It seemed to her, that these words lodged in her heart like arrows, and before her eyes flashed a vision of new and more fearful anguish, that was preparing for her. Left alone with the two new comers, and longing once more to speak and hear of Lamberto, although aware that every word might be a new torture, she began to say, hiding her agitation, and assuming as much indifference as she could:

"I also was at one time in the company of Signor Giovanni. Oh! I know him very well, that brave young man! I am glad he is now in Florence, — but tell me, — how is he? Did you say he was going to take a wife?"

"Yes, he takes a wife, — that is — not so very soon, I think," answered Troilo, with a malicious smile.

Selvaggia perceived that there was something underneath, and she longed to know what it was. But how was this to be brought about? Could she hope that these men would be willing to commit themselves so fully to a stranger, as to reveal to him their secrets? However, she manœuvred with so much dexterity

as to obtain from them the whole story of Lamberto's connection, first with Liza, and then with her sister, and, in short, of the impending marriage; but what was it that made its consummation so dubious? Who was to prevent it? And why? All this was concealed from her, and she could find no way of informing herself: in the meantime, the Maestro returned with a joyful visage, and said:

"I found the Signor in good humor, and disposed to be facetious — and things have gone on well — it will be done as you desire. Poor Signor, when his pains leave him a little peace, he is quite another person. Oh! he is indeed a great man! God grant him health and long life — he told me to send you up to him — here, by the little staircase — and he will see you willingly. So, if you please, — here it is."

Thus saying, he raised the tapestry which overhung the little door by which he had entered, and ushered them up, and then returning to his usual post, he said to Selvaggia:

"The man is found, eh?"

"He is found," answered the young woman, and coming close up to the Maestro, and taking him by the arm, she said hurriedly, and with a kind of stifled fury:

"Now I *will* know when this marriage is to take place, — why, and by whom it is to be impeded, — ask those men, — I will be in the next room."

"And how the devil would you have me make them tell me, if they choose to be silent about it?"

"I *will* know it! I tell you," cried Selvaggia, and darting upon him a glance which said the rest, she went in the dark into the next room.

Barlaam bit his lips for vexation, at finding himself so completely in the power of this woman, who, he well saw, was not to be mocked. But, if he ran a great risk in refusing to satisfy her, he perhaps would encounter one equally great, in attempting to discover the names, rank, and designs of these men. Their communication with Malatesta on behalf of the Palleschi party, these mysterious nocturnal visits, were an important and carefully guarded secret, under a Signoria wary and suspicious. How could it to Selvaggia, apparently half-crazed, and who would not fail to communicate it to Lamberto, one of the warmest adversaries of the Palleschi? And if by reason of this woman, these machinations should be discovered, was it not probable that Troilo and Nobili would accuse the stranger who was present on that evening, and thence the Maestro knows it? And then what would Malatesta do? Barlaam knew well what he would do.

any more than I.

"As you please, provided I k
and the wicked old man went up
ulating himself upon his cunning

Arrived at a dark passage, th
on coming out of Malatesta's ro
without taking the trouble to li
which it concerned him little t
instead, with manufacturing the
vaggia.

They soon came out, and appr
taking them by the hand, he le
opened upon the great stairway,

"On many accounts, it is bet
again by that soldier in my room
is honest, but a little hair-brain
persons that see you, the better,

This precaution seemed natur
without thinking any more of i
went away.

Barlaam went down into h
Selvaggia from her place of co
an ingenuous air:

"Now I know the whole, and
nate that I went up — for they
their is no such great mystery
they are two Florentine gentle
"and the young m

A fierce struggle arose in Selvaggia's heart at these words. To permit her Lamberto to be betrayed in such a manner, to permit him to suffer the terrible anguish, (and of this the unhappy woman had sufficient experience,) which was preparing for him, appeared to her a deception, a sin against one, for whom she would willingly have suffered a thousand pains, and she could not resolve to permit it with any degree of complicity. But, on the other hand, to give him, with her own hand, into the arms of her fortunate rival, to imagine him at the side of another, a happy husband, immersed in all the joys of love, and she, poor wretch, no longer to receive from him even a thought, to find herself anew abandoned by all, in her former isolate solitude! This idea was too enormous, too tremendous! Selvaggia, terrified, could not rest there, she was forced to retreat from such contemplations, and partly to excuse herself in her own eyes, and to compound, as it were, with visions so powerful and so opposite, she said to herself:

"I could reveal everything to Lamberto — could tell him that I may punish my fault — that he may kill me — but, first, to see him. Oh, yes; let me see him, let me speak to him once more!"

Wavering in these thoughts, she remained silent, and seemed wholly absorbed for some moments, then, deciding at last what she was to do, she started from her reverie, and said, resolutely, "Now, Maestro, I want two things of you, and then I leave you. One is, that I myself be sent to carry to Lamberto the orders for his departure. The other, that you will provide me with a suit of armor and a horse, that I may follow him."

"A suit of armor!" said the Maestro, astonished, "Are you wholly mad? Do you suppose that you can bear the weight of a suit of armor, or make any use of your limbs in it?"

"Whether I can or not, you shall see, but leave that to me."

"And where do you think I am to find these things?" exclaimed the Maestro, aghast at the expense, for he well knew that in a besieged country, whoever had horses and arms, kept them for himself.

"Maestro, I might answer you, by merely saying, that I need them, and I will have them — but I wish you to consider that rests with me to deprive you of something far greater than the price of a horse and a coat of mail — and remember, I want a helmet, with a visor that may be closed. Now, far well, and I am gone to-morrow."

Selvaggia went out, and the Maestro vexed and furious, was forced to consider how he should satisfy this woman, and get

pany were celebrating mass, in Florence with it.

Meantime, this same day was for ally, for the ladies, a day of thought awaking at dawn, with a serene and covering her head with a veil, when went to Servi to perform her devotion.

Upon returning home she went to her with more than his usual care the chambers which, to-day, might the aid of Mona Fede, she devoted to household linen and napery, with touching earnestness, which has its origin of the soul. Liza, who had recovered from first vexation of the moment, and ever from feelings of selfishness, to dissatisfaction, lent her aid and comfort but without that flood of words which human race, usually employ in their minds are not occupied with many thoughts.

Mona Fede was the only one who rather the soliloquy, and shuffling and counting and selecting articles of furniture and tables and all the furniture of the room.

"To think that one of the La married without time or means to do

Carefully dusting it, she opened it, and turning to a, she said:

if you will write, we will take an account of what I

mia took her writing apparatus, and standing beside upon which she was leaning, with pen in hand, began what Fede dictated:

gown and petticoat of crimson damask, trimmed with

tunic of Alexandrian damask, with flowered sleeves.

violet-colored embroidered petticoat.

dress with train, embroidered with white silk, with f crimson silk.

, I remember she put on, and it was the only time she e it, to see Charles VIII. enter the city; a little tiny man, so fair and white, he looked like a boy, and he he could swallow up Florence. Yes, yes, Pier Cap- ce to his memory — he taught him the right way — what times — what doings they had!

gown, with train of white serge, with sleeves of green

over-dress of white boccacino.

ve chemise, twelve night-caps, twelve handkerchiefs.

aty-five bibs, two large napkins.

bonnet of Alexandrian velvet, embroidered with pearls f."

," said Laudomia, "you may put back again, for these he times, neither am I in a condition to wear things of

rou please," answered Mona Fede, laying the head- le, then with a sigh, "poor young lady, that it should lot to marry at such an ugly time, without even the rry-making. Oh! this siege — when will it end, and oubles with it!

white damask bonnet.

derstand that Messer Niccolò will have no wedding ; there will be no invitations, nor music, and he had friends of the family that he will not even have the

use it is *he*, they all pay attention, for he is more han the Captain of Justice. I wish he were different! little hat of Alexandrian and white cloth.

leads used to wait for the bridegroom on his return from church, at his entering the door by a ribbon placed across. The bride- ght the passage by drink-money, which they spent in a supper.

"Eh! things did not go on so when he took a wife. I was a child; however, I remember it, and there were few of those laws made then. What do they call them? I do not know,—the sanctuary laws. In one respect they were really a good thing; for, before, there was such a passion for spending in marriage celebrations, that families were ruined.

"One Lady's prayer book, embroidered with pearls and ornamented with silver.

"Eh! if you could have seen the street here before the house, it was all covered with a canopy of red and white cloth, supported by pillars, and underneath was an enclosure of benches covered with tapestry.

"One string of coral paternoster beads.

"One belt of purple brocade, ornamented with silver.

"One pair rose-colored hose.

"One hand basin of ebony.

"One mug or ewer of the said basin.

"One ivory comb.

"Two purses of gold and silk.

"One silver finger shield.

"One mirror, with frame of bone, inlaid.

"And, as I was saying, the trumpeters of the Signoria on the steps of Santa Maria Maggiore, and the trumpets, the white banners and the red lily in the centre! and so many flowers, so much myrtle, and there must have been two hundred young gentlemen and ladies in the street, waiting for the dinner hour! And what finery! what riches! But your mother, Madonna Fiore, was one of the Albizzi, and she brought a portion of one thousand pounds; and the Albizzi, before Messer Rinaldo was ruined, were the first family in Florence. Things did not go on then as they do now.

"One pair of scissors.

"One pair of button hole cutters.

"Ribbons of various colors, and also different colored thread.

"One white stole, worked with silk.

"One horsetail, for combs, worked with silk.*

"Then, Fra Girolamo had not prohibited the dinners, the vigils, the merry-makings at weddings, he had not then formed the company of children to go through the houses, to ask the *anathema*, and then burn everything in the public square. He was a holy man, it is true, but he burned in his time great quantities of valuable property! And Messer Niccolò wished your mother to give to these children, dresses, and

* This was hung upon a nail, and was used for cleaning combs.

pa, and paint and lutes, and pictures worth hundreds of
 rials. Poor thing, she could not bear to do it, and she
 fared; but your father said, I *will* have it so! Who could
 oppose him? He had a portrait of Madonna Fiore by the
 end of Francia,—a beauty! It looked as if it was alive!
 But, too, he *would* have burned."

"Oh, well! let us thank God for what we still have,"
 answered Laudomia.

"Eh! I know it, poor young lady, you have little love of
 cry and amusements! Little do you care about these
 ngs, and you are right, as I was going to say. You will
 come the wife of the bravest and best young man in
 orence, and that will be enough, and God and the most holy
 mziata will bless you, and you will be as happy as you
 serve to be. Oh, yes! you see, my heart tells me that you
 ll have no more troubles, and I have always seen that these
 sentiments never deceive me."

"God bless you, Fede," replied Laudomia, and the day was
 rat in these occupations. Lamberto also was busied through
 e day in arranging his affairs, procuring the papers necessary
 : the contract, and visiting the spot in Santa Maria Novella,
 ere his mother was buried, to whom, on entering this new
 ste, he desired to consecrate his first thoughts.

In the evening, the family reassembled in Niccolò's apart-
 ment, where the friends who had received invitations did not
 l to appear, together with the notary Messer Tommaso Grossi,
 d then the whole company, Niccolò preceding, and the others
 lowing the affianced pair, went to the church of San Marco.
 Midway in the centre of the church, a carpet was spread,
 on which a table was placed, and around it were chairs and
 ols, a few candles lighted the church, at the door of which,
 ccolo and his retinue were received by Fra Benedetto and
 a Zaccaria, and soon after appeared a multitude of silk-
 rkers, soldiers, acquaintances of Lamberto, and people of the
 rer class, who, stationing themselves along the walls of the
 urch, made a circle around the table where the contract was
 be signed.

The crowd were held in respectful silence by the presence
 Niccolò, not a sound was heard save a subdued whisper from
 se to time, from one spectator in the ear of another, ex-
 cessive of praise and admiration of the beauty and the calm
 d august demeanor of the bride, which was such at this
 ment as to fix all eyes and impress all hearts.

Clothed in white, with a long veil descending from the
 reath of *orange flowers* that encircled her forehead, in passing

left, Lamberto, the friends
Fanfulla among them, on anot
and the notary, who, rising,
in this form :

" Anno, 1529, die 23, Novem.
S. Joannis de Florentia, recepit :
dam Cionis, de eodem populo S.
Lamberti, nomine dotis libras 100
uno Podere cum domibus et ha
libras 88, et solidos 10, in uno ca
de Florent. 1. d. Croce di via ; et
mobilibus ec. id eoque propter m
usum Civit. Florentiæ prædic
Laudomise donationem de ipsius b
" Actum Florentiæ testibus ec.
Postea incontinenti coram dicti
mia, per mutuum consensum inte
tionem et receptionem matrimoni
Thomas Grossi, quondam Franci
auct. Index atque Notarius public

Lamberto, who had had noth
contract, and did not even know
the delicate generosity of Niccol
the title of marriage-portion, w
mother had passed her last year
the old man, and one still more
in the meantime, the notary, w
salver, on which were two

, from time to time, drew the observation of all those and once looked at him.

le thinks he is on the walls, in the midst of the canonad- and not in church," said one. "He seems to have a chill, ever, he trembles all over!" observed another.

then the notary presented the rings to the betrothed, and approaching, exchanged them with each other, both turned heads at the same time, and the whole assembly with them, sound which came from within this man of iron. Those him, heard an indistinct suffocating noise resounding in the city of his helmet; he changed his position two or three, and almost lost his equilibrium, so that some one, fearing ould fall, had supported him by the arm and shoulders. ce at a little distance, said loud enough to be heard, "He ad too much wine, eh?" and many laughed slyly. Then er, "It is a great shame to come to church with so little et for the place." And so each one said what he pleased en the soldier, flinging upon the circle around him, an glance, which flashed through the openings in his visor, his way through them with his sharp, steel-clad elbows, amidst the murmurs of those who grumbled behind his made his way out of the church. Quiet was soon re- d, and no one thought any more about him.

e ceremony ended, the Frati sent away all those who not of the Lapi family, or included in their party. While were waiting for the knot of people to disperse, who, oing out, usually occupy the door, Messer Niccolò said to Benedetto with a sigh, though his countenance was se-

Jod has smitten me with a heavy blow in this church,—his very spot—now in His mercy, he wills that I find in compensation, the greatest consolation I could experience before I die! Praised be his holy name! Hear, Lambergy son—In giving you to-day my Laudomia, I believe, I have given you the highest gift in my power—if this ae, then have I fulfilled a great obligation, the promise a I made to your father on these very stones under our bathed so many years ago with the blood he shed for me.—come here—seest thou that white grave-stone? It was with the blood of thy father, that terrible night when we ined the assault of the enemy, in defence of Fra Girol—whom we hoped to save—But God, for our sins, ordered herwise. Here, I, alone, surrounded by enemies, must met my death—But, Piero, thy father, chose to die for May his brave soul look down from heaven to see me

embrace thee, accept thee for my son, and thus loose myself from my promise. May the love that you here swear to each other, be preserved immaculate and happy, reigning over every other affection of your hearts, yielding only to that august and holy love which you owe to your country and its liberties."

"God grant that both may be preserved," said Landomia in a low tone, and in her heart she added, "And my Lamberto with them."

It was now time for Niccolò to leave the church, and saluting and thanking the Frati, he told Fra Benedetto, that within two days, they would return there for the nuptial benediction, and then in the same order in which they came, they returned to the house.

Mona Fede, in the meantime, not strictly obedient to the wishes of Niccolò, was exerting herself to adorn the rooms on the lower floor as much as possible; and in the first, which served as antechamber to Niccolò's sleeping apartment, she had made preparations for the supper, in the nicest manner; with abundance of flowers, and a bountiful supply of lighted candles, she was preparing the table, assisted by Lamberto's servant, Maurice. While the nuptial party were still in S. Marco, and she was making her arrangements in the utmost trepidation, in the fear that they might come in upon her before she was quite ready, some one knocked at the street door—"There! now we are caught," she grumbled, "when I've nobody but this tortoise to help me," and leaving to Maurice the care of wiping some plates which she had in her hand, she ran to open the door. In a half a minute she returned, and snatching the towel from the hand of the servant, whose manner of using it was not to her mind, she said:

"One can't have a minute's peace for these soldiers! It was a man-at-arms, with his visor down, as if he were at a jousting-match. He wanted Lamberto—Yes! would wait, it is likely he can attend to him now! I told him he was in S. Marco, and shut the door in his face."

And without thinking any more about the matter, she continued to run backwards and forwards, with her slippers pulled up at the heel, as briskly as if she were but twenty, so that when she heard in the street the voices and footsteps of the returning company, she had just lighted the last candle, and Maurice had placed the last stool at the table.

She ran to open the door wide, to be the first to welcome the betrothed; it being of the utmost importance according to her theory of omens, that those who had exchanged rings, should, on their return home, be greeted with words of friendly pre-

age. Several times she had listened, dreading to hear the roar of those *blessed* lions, who, on so many occasions, had, according to her notion, helped her so wonderfully to read the future, but, thank fortune, they were silent.

When she got to the threshold, and was drawing the bolt, he saw that the broom had been left behind the door, a bad augury, according to the Florentine women; and that on the floor, directly in the passage, there were by accident, two straws lying crosswise.

"I suppose it would have broken the arms of that good-for-nothing to sweep this floor!" she said, seizing the broom, and sweeping; then picking up one of the straws, she threw it behind her, over her left shoulder, and with this potent conjuration, she felt reassured of the future fate of the newly-betrothed.

"Happiness and health for a hundred years, Signorina," said the old woman to Landonia, careful to pronounce these words exactly as Landonia crossed the threshold; and she was about to kiss her hand, but she received an embrace instead, which she returned reverently and affectionately, and as they entered one after another, Niccolò said:

"Mona Fede, I did not request you to have so much light!"

But the reproof was tempered by a smile, and passing on, he went to seat himself at the fire, in his great chair, around which the family collected, waiting to be called to table.

Landonia, who had gone out with her sister to lay aside her veil and girdle, returned, and seating herself near Lamberto, began to say to him, those heart-felt, soul-stirring words, which give even trifles importance in the breasts of lovers—and at the same time, Troilo, Liza, the brothers and friends, formed a group a little apart, leaving the betrothed in freedom to enjoy their own conversation.

All faces were cheerful, all mouths smiling, even the very rooms, sparkling with light, neatly arranged and adorned with the greatest care, presented a most gay appearance, and seemed to promise for that evening a pleasant and agreeable festival, far different from the hours usually passed there, filled with painful and melancholy forebodings, when two loud knocks were heard at the street door, and in a few moments, a man appeared at the door of the apartment, encased in armor, who remained motionless for a moment, looking round upon the company, not a little to their astonishment, as many among them recognized the soldier they had seen in St. Marco a little while before; and they could not imagine who he was, or what he wanted.

"What news do you bring, my brave fellow?" asked Niccolò, and the other, with a voice indistinctly audible through his closed helmet, said, turning to Lamberto, and handing him a sealed paper:

"From the Captain General."

Lamberto, leaving his place at the side of Laudomia, took the letter, and opening it, read there an order to arm himself on the instant, mount his horse, and follow the person who brought this order, to join the company, then forming in the square of San Spirito, to go where it concerned the service of the city.

What the young man felt, on reading a command so absolute, the reader may imagine. Laudomia, who, motionless and terrified, kept her eyes on his face while he was reading, saw his cheeks flush, and in consternation moved towards him: he looked at her with dubious and tender smile as if to re-assure her, and handed the letter to Niccolò, who, looking first at one, then at another, began to suspect its purport.

He read it over twice, while all the others remained in the greatest suspense; and to poor Laudomia, every second seemed an age. At last, raising to heaven a look of ardent trustfulness, he said:

"Yes, Gracious God! But at least grant that Florence may be saved!" and while he was pronouncing these words, the timid Laudomia, forgetful of all propriety, darted upon the letter, snatched it from the hand of her father, and in a flash she had read the whole. She remained for a moment with her eyes rivetted upon the writing, then, raising them tearfully and pleadingly to the face, now of Lamberto, now of her father, she seemed to implore the comfort of a little hope; she sought to discover there the shadow of a possibility of eluding that command, of getting rid of it some way or other. But instead of that, she read on the brow of both, the irrevocable sentence which condemned her to new and indefinite suffering, and, educated as she was in the house of Niccolò, she renounced entirely all the hopes she had conceived, and remained silent and tearful, but resigned.

At last, all present were informed of the nature of the calamity, and every one showed the greatest interest and sympathy this new calamity.

"How can this be so," said Vieri, "if your company, Lamberto, is not to leave Florence?"

The young man shrugged his shoulders, for he supposed himself sure of that fact, and, therefore, he believed himself free to celebrate his marriage.

"Is there no way," added Liza, "of getting a substitute?"

Troilo then thrust himself forward, and said, resolutely:

"I will be the substitute, Lamberto! brother! and you, Messer Niccolò, you will not deny me this favor. It is not right for him to leave his betrothed, and go, God knows where, in a moment like this! I will run to Signor Malatesta, and return with permission to go in his place."

And the knave, who knew that on this occasion he might make a great parade of his generosity, with little expense, started as if to go; but Liza secretly gave a twitch at the folds of his cloak, and Lamberto openly seized his arm, for, loyal and incapable of dissimulation, as he was, he fully believed in the sincerity of Troilo's offer, and he felt grateful for it.

"I thank you, brother!" he said, looking at him with affection, and it was the first time; "I thank you, but it would not comport with my honor — you know what the duty of the soldier is — but I shall remember your offer." And he pressed his hand.

"The country, first of all, children!" said Niccolò, in a loud voice. "Obey blindly, and seek no farther — Lamberto, Laudomia, I have told you — it grieves me to the heart, but this is not the time for sighs, it is the time of free and daring deeds." Then, taking Laudomia's arm, and stooping down to her ear, he said:

"Remember what I told you — show yourself strong, serene — be chary of your caresses — say not those things which go to the heart."

And poor Laudomia, with downcast eyes, bowed in the affirmative, for she could not trust herself to speak.

During these agitations, the man of steel had remained motionless, leaning against the doorway, excepting that once he advanced a few steps, as if about to speak, and then, as if changing his intention, returned to his former position. At that moment, the generous Selvaggia, unable to endure the sight of Lamberto's grief, or the tears even of a rival, resolved to come forward, reveal herself, and disclose everything. But the power of executing this noble purpose, of renouncing the hope of one more interview with Lamberto, suddenly failed her, "It will be brief, it will be the last trial!" she said to herself, and she resumed her first design.

The time was pressing. Lamberto called his servant.

"Maurice, saddle the horses, take down the new oak lance, and, in going out, show this honest man where my armor hangs. To gain time, he will be so kind as to assist me in arming myself; is it not so?" he added, turning to Selvaggia,

While she was busy on one side, she called for her aid on the other, and not a word was said, serving the hands of the unknown. She was wondering how a man-at-arms could be so gentle and delicate. But Lamberto and the captain were agitated to observe this circumstance.

In this moment of sadness and reflection, a horse was heard in the distance, making a quick trot. Laudomia stopped to listen, thinking it might be a message from the captain, or perhaps it may have come from some mistake. "Do not be so frightened to frighten me!" And the horse stopped at the great gate, and all at once stopped. "What is it?" said Laudomia, filled with hope.

She was not thinking, poor thing, that the captain and Lamberto kept his horse was but a moment. It was Maurice, who, having saddled his horse, rode him on a quick gallop. He was ready; farewell to the last day.

Lamberto, armed from head to foot in gold, with vizor raised, and face shining, he and Niccolò and all the others with him, went to embrace Fanfulla, but Selvaggio, who he had learned the orders she had given, without saying good-night to any one, and, not seeing him, he said, "Benediction!" and had not done speaking, when Fanfulla had already gone on the way.

for me, and to this hide of mine, one gun-shot, more or less, would not signify; but it was of no use, so I put on my ~~case~~ in quick time, took this trifle in my hand, and I am ~~as~~, and I go with you into the country. If you do not care to be in the company of a foot soldier, who, after a certain ~~time~~, does his duty on foot, but before he dies — enough! — ~~say~~, Madonna Laudomia, Messer Lamberto does not need a ~~key~~ to brush the flies from his nose — but no matter — I ~~ask~~ to bring him back to you, safe and sound, and believe me, ~~know~~ what I am saying, and you shall see him again, cost ~~what~~ it may."

Laudomia ran to the good Fanfulla with her hands clasped together, and she was almost ready to embrace him, for his words seemed to her to come from heaven.

"Oh! you shall not go on foot!" said Lamberto. And he insisted upon Fanfulla's taking the horse of his own servant.

Niccolò sent in haste for the equipments of a cavalier, and presented them to Fanfulla, who felt restored to life and honor, seeing himself out of that cursed infantry, which he held in such odium.

Proceeding together to the great gate, they found Selvaggia in the saddle. Fanfulla vaulted to his, almost without touching stirrup, and he could not restrain an "Ah!" of delight as he felt himself again on the back of a horse of spirits altogether different from his old Grifone.

Laudomia had come thus far without uttering one word, for fear of disobeying her father, only, clinging to Lamberto's arm for support, she said, in a deep voice, choked with sobs, "God defend thee!" Then she closed her eyes, she felt the trembling lips of her betrothed impressed upon her hand; in a few moments she heard three horses set off upon the gallop; then she felt a friendly embrace, she found her head on the breast of Niccolò, who, pressing her to his heart, said:

"I am *satisfied* with you, my daughter. Now you may weep."

Then the poor girl gave way to a burst of tears.

MESSER Francesco Ferruccio, who was in the evening at Niccolò's in the early part of the year at that time in Florence, almost forty," until, finding it necessary to go to Prato, they sent him thither by advice of Niccolò Notti, their Secretary, who was unwisely chosen, and should remain overlooked, when he was so much needed. He remained in Prato but a short time, in consequence of his disputes with Lorenzo de' Medici, Governor of the province, he was removed to a large borough, situated almost in the middle of the Arno, on the way to Pisa, six miles (now eighteen) by the old road which was called Malmantile.

His conduct, in the discharge of the duties which he had to perform, had not only been expected from his virtue, but he had added new fortifications to the walls of the city, before, he now made impregnable, as the walls were so, he devoted his efforts to his duties, and contiguous castles, by bold and frequent expeditions, which he soon acquired a high reputation for, in favor of the Signoria and the people.

About this time he wrote to the Signoria, minutely the plan of new enterprises, which he himself, and among others, that of the conquest of the Spaniards. He requested, to this effect, Amico d'Arsoli and

The soldiers already mounted, and drawn up in order of battle in two files, facing the church, four trumpeters standing on the right, a little apart, and in front on the pavement, the two *condottieri*, Jacopo Bichi, and Amico d'Arsoli, with their banners and two sergeants. Lamberto and his companions were the last to arrive, and while they were crossing the square, on a quick trot, to place themselves in file with the others, Amico d'Arsoli called out after them, "On! On!" with an oath, in that agreeable manner well known to those who have served under an old soldier of rigid discipline, who holds in especial horror that species called by the French *trai-nards* (laggards).

The company thus assembled, the roll was called by the sergeant, and Arsoli, drawing his sword, turned his horse, giving, in a loud voice, the order to put themselves in motion,—“Two abreast, to the right! Forward!”

And so, filing off, through the Fondaccio, they came to the Ponte alla Carraja, and the Porta al Prato, from whence they issued into the country, proceeding towards Signa.

The night was serene, the air sharp and piercing, and the starry sky sparkled with its usual winter's brilliancy. The soldiers in their dark cloth cloaks were riding briskly, forming two dusky files along the middle of the road, which was slightly whitened with frost, and the silence was unbroken, save by the whispered words of one soldier to his neighbor, or by an angry execration, when a horse stumbled, and the rider punished him with a couple of pricks with the spur.

Lamberto, arriving last in the public square, had placed himself at the left hand of the company, and, in the order of movement, found himself now in the rear. This, by a curious phenomenon, doubtless observed by many of my readers who have performed military duty, ought always to ride faster than the van, if it would keep up with it. He was, therefore, constrained every now and then, with the other soldiers of the rear guard, to put his horse into a quick trot, until they arrived at the cruppers of those who preceded them; and then again, gradually falling behind, and again urging on their horses, they regained their lost distance, but to sustain his place thus for any length of time, he needed to have his mind on what he was about, and not, as it actually was, left behind in Florence.

On any other occasion, this nocturnal departure for a perilous and important action, would have been for him a real treat; but, at this moment, and who could be so severe as to condemn him? his tempest-tossed heart was filled with an indefinable melancholy. It seemed to him, that, in this unexpected

about to enter these gorges, and range to an ambushade; he foresaw, pract the leaders, before setting foot in orders for the closing of the ranks that the pass was free.

Not finding Lamberto at his side him coming, but at a great distance and, galloping back, met him, crying

"Use your spurs, Messer Lamb hear from Arsoli, in that mouth going to put ourselves into. He w straggling behind."

Lamberto started, spurred on by company, and, with him Selvaggia, v at his side, without finding means herself, or to say one word to hi have lost this opportunity, which much study and fatigue, promisig she would not be so timid and co taken her place in file with her co command of Arsoli, made a halt.

He needed swift-footed infantry ing thickets, and assure the safety men-at-arms, loaded with iron, wh these steep places. He was oblig with sending in advance eight horse and when he judged that they ha

ramp of the horses, and the clinking of the greaves, or leg-armor, against the stirrup.

The conversation, subdued but tranquil, which was heard here and there along the files, showed the boldness of these men, on an occasion which usually puts the courage of the soldier to the severest proof; that is, when an ambushed, indefinite danger, is impending, and against which arms or defence are of little avail, as was the case at this moment, when one weak, hostile hand, might, by rolling down stones from the over-hanging heights, destroy them irremediably.

But these men had, for a long time, promised to their country the sacrifice of their lives, and this promise they almost all kept at Gavinana, where their honored bones still remain at our day, wholly reduced to dust, or arresting sometimes, in the fields, the mattock of the peasant, who little knows how much virtue, how much glory, he is trampling under his feet.

The fortune which awaited them there, ashamed, perhaps, to bring upon them here an unavenged and gloomy death, had not conducted to the ambushade a single enemy, and they moved free and unmolested, and crossing the country, below the ancient castle of the Malmantile, they descended Monte Apio, and soon found themselves out of these gorges, where the plain of Empoli begins, extending the Val-d'Arno among more distant and gentle declivities.

The order maintained on that part of the route, where danger was apprehended, was gradually relaxed, when the troops found themselves in more secure and open situations, and Selaggia, who had never quitted Lamberto, purposely held in her horse, hoping that his horse, being left to himself by the order, would, by natural instinct, also slacken his pace, and thus she would find herself alone with the young man, resolved in time to tell him — what? Poor girl: knowing, as she did, Lamberto's situation, she was conscious, that for her, henceforth, remained not a shadow of hope, and to reveal the tremendous passion that was consuming her, to one who could respond only with a sterile and humiliating pity, was, indeed,

hard matter. But the love which takes counsel of pride, ought rather to be called self-love, and this was not Selaggia's.

"I will find words," she thought, "and, if I do not, he shall see my tears, my desperation. I will throw myself at his feet, at his horse's feet, that he may trample me in the dust, and thus will I quit, at once, this life of torment."

Revolving these unhappy thoughts, she was gradually accomplishing her design of being left behind the others, alone with

must.

In order to fix within herself uncertainty, which made her that she could scarcely support herself, at a little distance, plant herself, "When we get there,

But, arrived at the tree, with that it seemed as though it opened her lips, an inarticulate could not form word or phrase feelings which agitated her and which took possession of her. In other mode of relief, her eyes broke forth so loud, that Lampl which he was plunged, quickly for, supposing his companion his conduct struck him as perfect.

"Oh! what is this?" he said and fixing his eyes on the face discern in the obscurity, although Two or three times he repeated taining any answer, and he began was losing his wits, when, at last for breath, these words, of which cognize the terrible truth:

"And, if I have no defence as you desired — if I *could* not die

And here, not really knowing herself what she should like, or what she would ask ; no words coming to her to finish the phrase she had begun, she began to sob anew, with her head bent down upon the neck of her horse, her hands resting on the pommel of the saddle.

By the voice, and still more by the impassioned words, Lamberto recognized Selvaggia, and he felt a twinge in his heart, well knowing the predicament in which he now found himself. Not having any kind of comfort to offer her, he would have bought, at any price, the power of curing her of this mad and unavailing passion ; and, through the pity he felt for her, there was nothing he would not have done, to restore her to peace with herself, and see her tranquil and happy. Already, before this encounter, foreseeing the possibility of it, he had considered, within himself, in case of such an occurrence, what course of conduct he had best pursue, for the sake of this poor woman, and he reasoned thus :

" If I let her see the pity with which she inspires me, and attempt to console her, by kind and humane treatment, her too ardent heart will always retain in its depths some hope, and, deeming me good and generous, she will become more attached to me than ever. I will, then, appear severe, proud, incredulous of her sufferings, (the remedy will be bitter, painful, for her, and as much so for me,) but when this moment has passed, her esteem will change, perhaps, into contempt, her love into hate. After a few days, she will think no more of me, and I shall be able to say, I have conferred upon her the only benefit in my power."

We will not assert that this last result might not awaken a little sorrow in the heart of Lamberto, without his confessing it to himself, but, however that might be, he was incapable of that puerile and odious sentiment which the French call *coquetterie*, and which germinates only in hearts of fickle women. Having, then, well weighed the subject, he decided upon carrying his plan into effect, and the twinge that he felt in his heart, which we mentioned above, was exactly that which one feels, when, having for a long time formed a resolution disagreeable of execution, he finds himself, suddenly and unexpectedly, under the necessity of fulfilling it. " Courage, Lamberto," he said, to fortify himself, while Selvaggia was speaking, " think of the true advantage of this poor woman, and not of her or thy pleasure."

When she had done speaking, though his heart was torn by her sobs of despair, he said, simulating, as much as he could, indifference and irony :

poor soldier, at the best, like all
rant, neither do I call myself
been dead and buried for a long
But what could put it into your
willing to be persuaded that you
you not know that I am already ;
it is proper for me to keep my th
proper business, and not have n
adventures of paladins and roms
that evening in Lombardy, on
had got rid of these foolish fanc
enjoying yourself, or, to tell you
miles off from thinking of your ;
that, here you are again, fresh as
song over again ! ”

The poor girl, almost stunned
struck speechless. She bent her
what feelings we may imagine, fo
attack, added :

“ Cheer up, Selvaggia, it is tir
sense, and if you will not, I must
comedies, are beyond my compre
to let this be the last, I shall be
any good whatever ; leave me, tl
you a thousand times. Adieu ! ”

“ Yes, adieu, and forever,” an
beside herself : for in her way

heart of this unhappy woman, which *was* yours, and which you deserved not, wretch ! And, not satisfied with spurning it, you have been willing to heap obloquy upon it, to treat it with insult ! Insult ! Outrage ! To me ! And you think yourself so brave ! You think you may laugh at me, to whom you owe your life ! Yes, Lamberto, it was I and no other, who on the Capitana di Spagna, at the battle of Salerno, received in my breast the point of that pike, which was aimed at your heart. I, to save your life, lived in pain, in misery, in desperation, and now, think you, that your insults can rise high enough to reach me ? I have compassion upon you, for God will prepare for you what you deserve, and sooner than you may think. For I declare to you, that this lady of yours, now, at this very moment, while I am speaking, is already where you would not wish her to be, and they have sent you away, solely that they may have an opportunity to take her from you, and you, fool, have not been shrewd enough to discover the snare, but I know who has spread it for you, I know the whole, but I will not tell you ; for, had you treated me otherwise, I should have had courage to inform you of the whole. See, unhappy man, how, until now, I have been disposed to aid you ; now, if you should cut me in pieces as small as the eye of a needle, I would not tell you ! No, no, you shall not know it, and this Laudomia of yours, neither God nor angels can save. Speak, wretch, do not you yourself now feel the pains of hell ? Do you not feel them now, for once in your life ? Well, feel them henceforth, forever, and now I also will say adieu." She turned her horse, and plunging the spurs into his side, set off in a furious gallop towards Florence, while one might say " God help me," and in two seconds her horse's footsteps were out of hearing.

Lamberto, excessively agitated by what he had just heard of the peril by which Laudomia was threatened, turned his own horse to rejoin and stop her, but when his horse had given two or three leaps forward, he was satisfied that the thing was impossible, and also checked by the consideration that he could not desert his standard at any rate, he drew bridle, and, plunged in grief, resumed his way. A moment's reflection was sufficient to tranquillize him entirely with regard to the vicinity of the danger : in Florence, in the house of her father, Laudomia had nothing to fear, and he was persuaded, allowing there were really a plot which Selvaggia had discovered, that it could not be carried into effect so promptly, and that these threats had been made use of by her, solely as the effect of her anger, to annoy him, and fill his mind with anxious suspicions. How-

...to thought, he went
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him that the mode had been t
unbridled nature, she might d
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what had become of her, and i
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Constrained by these reflecti
his thoughts to God, entreating
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While the good Lamberto
vaggia's horse, tortured by the
live flesh, and terrified by the
which made itself felt upon hi
with open and bloody nostrils,
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of his flight to the very extent o
ments found himself again amon
so steep and difficult. Here, una
self firmly on all four feet, wet
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dorsal ridge, to try to throw fro
insupportable tribulation.

on this side, now to that, still held on his way, and came within hair's breadth of stumbling headlong over the little low wall on the edge of that part of the road where the descent is almost perpendicular. There was no spectator of this strange battle, which lasted for some time, and ended through very weariness.

The tired beast suddenly stopped short, his knees trembling so that it seemed as if he would fall every moment. Selvaggia laid her hand on her forehead, from which the perspiration was dropping, and, trying herself to regain breath, she looked around and above, she saw that the dawn was already tinging the hill-tops with an azure light, and in the space of sky overhead a flock of crows was passing over, cawing on the wing. She continued to gaze at them for some moments with fixed and staring eyes, and then, either from mental vacillation or hysterical affection, she broke into a loud, fearful laugh, that echoed through the solitude.

She remembered, at that moment, having sometimes seen on the fields of battle, troops of these birds, hovering joyful and loquacious over the corpses, and making merry in their own fashion over the rich supper awaiting them, and, blinded by the hatred which she felt towards all men indiscriminately, by the desire of vengeance against that pitiless race, the cause of all her woe, she said, still laughing, as she followed with her eye these aerial voyagers, until the last disappeared behind the hills :

"God bless you, crows, a thousand times!" Then she thought she would dismount, and, leaping to the ground, she stretched herself upon the bank by the roadside, and there she remained motionless, with her mind in a state which may be likened to twilight, not so much obscured as to be unconscious of her present condition, and not clear enough to listen to the dictates of reason.

The ground on which she was lying, was covered with a thick frost, which soon melted into water all around her body. The poor girl was in a burning fever.

The cold and the brief repose seemed, after a little while, to restore her, and she felt that the dense mist which darkened her intellect was gradually dispersing.

She saw Lamberto before her eyes as if he were present. — she heard the sound of his words, he almost seemed to repeat them anew, and he spoke with that sinister smile, which, not being in harmony with the expression of his eyes, and the rest of his face, seemed rather a spasmodic affection of the lips.

"Oh! oh! To laugh at me! Do you still mock me? Look to

yourself, honest man — for things may take a turn at last, and then it will be my turn to laugh, and yours to weep! So may the devil help me, as I shall know how to help myself, if I get an opportunity. I should like to see this perfect man, with his great virtue, his great prowess, who thinks everybody vile in comparison with himself, and that lady of his, that angel, that great affair. I should like to see them, and hear what they they have to say, when it comes their turn to ask pity with arms crossed, and of whom? Selvaggia, the courtesan! the vile, the mad, the degraded!"

She bit her lip, and, raising her head, she shook it menacingly.

"Every one is against me! Be it so. I against every one! He who has the most flax, can weave the most woof! And we shall see it! Until now, you have only seen my love! Now for hate! Only let me have a few minutes to think of it—I will not deal with you in any ordinary way. One like you, so far above all others, is not to be treated like one of the vulgar!"

And with her head bent downwards, her cheeks and eyes livid and hollow, she was fixedly ruminating a thousand projects, which might have been seen passing over her face, like the clouds on a stormy sky, which, driven by the winds, whirl in a hundred wild and fantastic shapes.

She started at last, as if seized by a new idea: she raised her head and held it motionless, inclined a little one side like one who listens, and she seemed to be listening intently to the voice that was speaking to her soul, then she said:

"This will be the greatest of all. Oh! if I only succeed. But have I a heart that will hold out to conduct it to the end?"

And from that breast, agitated by wild passion, issued even then a sigh. Perhaps the new project appeared to her too grievous and enormous, — perhaps at that moment, the memory of her love was rekindled in her heart, like the fierce flame, which, when covered with ashes, finds its way through, blazes and glitters for a moment, and then vanishes. It is not important to disclose now the cause of that sigh, for it will probably be explained to him who has the patience to finish the story; but the fact was, that after several such sighs, she covered her face with both hands, and any one who had observed her at this moment, would have supposed she was weeping. She remained seated thus for some time, then, gradually sank upon the ground, her hands still covering her face, until after a long time, her arms, apparently losing all strength, fell by her side.

Then, her face was revealed, pale and haggard, the muscles relaxed from the contractions of passion, but retaining still the traces of the terrible tempest which had passed over that desolate soul. It gave back the picture of a country, swept by a tremendous whirlwind, upon whose soil, furrowed by the rush of waters, and trees uprooted and despoiled of their foliage, and upon entire nature, settles the calm, the silence of astonishment and consternation.

At last she recovered her sitting posture, then with difficulty, (for her limbs were stiff and weary,) she rose to her feet; coming to her horse, she arranged the reins, and, grasping his mane and the back part of the saddle-bow, after two or three unsuccessful attempts, she regained her saddle.

Taking her way towards Florence, her figure bent, her head resting on her breast, she appeared so utterly disheartened, that it did not seem possible she could be the same person, and the horse, too, from the slow and dragging movements of his legs, hardly seemed like the same animal, who, a little while before, had worked himself into such a fury.

At the first turning of the road, both were lost to view, and, with the permission of the reader, we will leave them to go their way, as Lamberto and his troop are awaiting us at the gate of Empoli.

The sun had just risen, and with its rosy light, was already tinging the white drapery of frost that glittered on the hills, trees and house-tops, leaving the parts not illuminated, of a diaphanous and bluish hue, when the soldier upon guard on the tower, over against the gate of the city, descried the company at a distance, and recognizing the lily in the standard, gave the signal that the expected succor had arrived, and the news was soon carried to Ferruccio.

The Commissary, who had already been up a long time, for it was difficult to find him in bed, at whatever hour he might be sought, was near by, overseeing the repairing of some bastion.

Upon hearing the news, he hastened to meet the welcome reinforcement, and gave orders to lower the bridge, raise the portcullis and open the gate.

The men entered, the trumpets sounding before them, preceded by the two leaders, who, filing off before the Commissary, saluted him by bowing and lowering their lances.

Ferruccio, a tall, athletic man, dressed in a brown cloak, high boots, and a cap that drooped on one side, stood to see them pass, with his legs a little apart, his arms folded on his breast, his brow high and austere, under which flashed that bold look

of his, which, from the color of the pupils and the prominence of the eye-brow, resembled that of the eagle.

With a hasty nod of the head, he answered the salutes of the two *condottieri*, while, motioning with his hand, he ordered them to exhibit their soldiers in battle array on the open square just within the gate. The soldiers, who had bound their cloaks on their horses' cruppers, and arranged their equipments in their best style, appeared a fine looking, well-mounted troop, and, at the command of Arsoli, they took a turn through the square, and then drew up in lines. Ferruccio stepped to the front, his arms still crossed as before, and, approaching the two leaders, who stood in the centre of the square, a little in advance of the others, he said, with sonorous voice, and that abrupt manner which belongs to the soldier:

"A fine company. Men, horses, arms, all good. We shall set them at work, and that soon, for, by the cross, I shall wait no longer. You will order refreshments for them; then I expect you at my quarters. Anything new from Florence? I knew of the assault by the Prince, from my letters of yesterday. He will see yet, that the merchants know how to make bastions and discharge artillery. Now two words to your soldiers."

And, turning to the troops that were stationed before him in motionless silence, he said, with a smile:

"These Spanish miscreants here, in the country, have such cursed legs, that it was difficult for me to overtake them; you will do that business, brave men. With your good spurs and your twelve yards of lance, we will give their backs a trial, please God. Remember, we are all fighting for our country, and I give you warning, that in this holy cause, I shall spare neither your lives nor my own. I shall acquit myself of my duty as leader, since our rulers have honored me with the command. You will see to it, that you perform your duties as brave soldiers, for I am not the man to tolerate any other course. You will now rest yourselves, for I shall not leave you long with your hands idle. Long live the *Marzocco*! Long live the Republic!"

This cry was responded to by the troop and the populace, who had gathered round in crowds; and while the soldiers were dismounting and preparing to lead their horses to their quarters, they said among themselves:

"And this is called making a speech! His tongue does not tremble in his throat! He is a devil, this man, and he would not yield to the Emperor. We shall have the plough straight with this *muso*.* If he takes a fancy to strike, we cannot help ourselves!"

* *Muso*, a snout, or muzzle of a beast; *musi* in the plural.

And one of them, turning to Fanfulla, who was whistling under his moustache, in his own fashion, while he threw the stirrups over the saddle, said to him, "What do you say of him, Fra Bombardo?"

Fra Bombardo said, "If you have the flask to your mouth, and the Commissary says to you, 'Enough!' don't swallow another drop, if you wish the way of bread to remain open to you. As to *musi*, I understand them — I have seen more than one coming out from under the morion, with bristles stiff enough, but such as this man, I have never until now, seen but two, that of Sig. Giovanni, and that of the great Captain, and that is all I have to say now."

In the meantime, the company were all lodged in the quarters previously prepared for them.

CHAPTER XXV.

As soon as Arsoli and Bichi had disposed of their troops, they were conducted to the Commissary, and with them went Lamberto, who, we forgot to mention, had been commissioned by Niccolò, to tender his greetings to his friend the Commissary, and also to narrate to him his own recent experiences.

Ferruccio was lodged in the house of the Commune, in the public square, and they found him awaiting them in a room on the first floor, the walls of which were covered with devices of lilies and lions, above which, beneath the entablature, were painted the arms of the governors who had ruled the town, among whom, was the conqueror of the Ciompi, Michele di Lando. The Commissary was seated near a large table, where he was in the habit of settling his accounts. He saluted the newly arrived guests, who entered, still in complete armor, just as they had come from Florence. At a sign from him, they seated themselves, and Arsoli said, "This, Signor Commissary, is Messer Lamberto, whom you know by name, if not by sight."

"Ah!" replied Ferruccio, looking delighted, "I am very happy to know you, for I have not a greater friend than Messer Niccolò, and I know how much he esteems you."

Lamberto, then, having first presented him with the salutations of his father-in-law, narrated to him the whole affair of Troilo, and how he had left the camp, and joined the Piagnoni party. He spoke then of his intended marriage with Laudomia, and of the manner, and the reason why it had been interrupted, and, seeing that Ferruccio listened to him with a most gratifying attention, he told him of the mysterious warning he had received on the way, of some unknown plot against Laudomia, and asked permission to despatch a messenger directly to Florence, in order that means might be taken to guard against the danger, and investigate its reality and design.

"I most willingly give you permission, and, if the service of the city allowed it, I would say to you, go in person; but one good sword is worth its weight in gold in these days, and I cannot spare it. I know it must have been a great trial for

"Messer Lamberto, to leave such a bride, to take the lance instead: at least, I suppose so," he said, smiling, "for I understand little of these things, and, have never had leisure enough, in my life, to be able to think about women. At any rate, a man like you will be able to have good patience, for now our amours must be with arquebus and mortar."

"As to that, I hope to show you that I know my duty, and that my first love is that of my country, and nothing else."

So spoke Lamberto, and his bold visage left no doubt of his veracity. Bowing to Ferruccio, he took his leave, and soon found a horseman, willing to convey to Florence, the letter to Laudomia. This, Lamberto wrote as quickly as possible, and in it, he narrated minutely all that had happened to him the night previous, without omitting a syllable of what had passed between him and Selvaggia. After strongly recommending to them to use their efforts to discover the truth or falsity of these snares, which might, however, have been invented by her out of pure spite, an opinion to which he himself strongly inclined; he went on to deplore, and express his remorse, for the harsh manner he had used towards this unhappy woman, explaining to Laudomia his motives for so doing, and, in fact, showing in what agitation of mind he found himself on her account.

The emotions he had experienced through this accident, he knew well how to express, and, perhaps, too well; for, writing in haste, and with mind pre-occupied, he had not time to weigh and consider his words, and the effect which they would be likely to produce upon her who would read them in a more tranquil state of mind. Finally, he begged Laudomia to send out people on the road to Empoli, and its vicinity, in search of Selvaggia; and, having had so many things to say, and so little time to say it in, he concluded his letter much more abruptly than he certainly would have done, if the emergency had not seemed so pressing.

When he had written it, he folded it in four, as was the fashion of that time, and piercing it through, tied it with a little cord, the ends of which he secured with a seal.

Away sped the messenger, spurring on his horse so rapidly, that, towards two o'clock in the afternoon, he dismounted before the door of the Lapi. Mona Fede came to the door; she took the letter, and ran delighted into Niccolò's apartment, where he was with his daughters. Troilo also happened to be present. Laudomia, recognizing the handwriting of the superscription, said joyfully, with a slight blush:

"Oh! poor Lamberto! he has written me already!" and began to read. As she read, her countenance was seen to

him.

"He is a noble fellow," he said. "I have me say : We must do w
way."

Then, turning to Troilo, with more and more familiar every seen the promptitude with which substitute for Lamberto, and, looking permission, he said :

"With Laudomia's leave, I send letter. You will see there was and that, since you were willing the courtesy was not lost upon

Troilo, upon becoming aware his designs had leaked out, could stop, so much did he wonder in it could have been discovered in gesture of surprise that escaped bystanders in quite another sense natural astonishment at a thing the letter named no one, soon

"There is no doubt about it, must do as he says. Leave the person who will attend to the that I may fix in my mind the that I may identify her, for, if her."

So saying, he went out, while

If the good young woman had been willing to descend to such self-examination, she might, perhaps, from thought to thought, have arrived at many observations upon this excessive pity of Lamberto, upon the too laconic conclusion of his letter; she might, perhaps, have seen there, the desire to monopolize herself, all this compassion for the misfortunes of this unhappy woman. God knows how many things she would have found in that poor heart of hers! But she was by no means willing to scrutinize it too closely at this moment.

But the seed, once dropped into the furrow, needs it further aid? It works alone, germinates in silence, and when, sprouting from the earth, it first manifests itself, it has already put forth the beard.

Troilo, in the meantime, had devoted himself to the search after this Selvaggia, who, in a manner so inconceivable to him, appeared to be so well informed of his designs, and, certainly, neither Lamberto, nor any other person, could have been more anxious to find her than he. He sent out people in quest of her, he made every possible inquiry, and this he did for two days, but it was useless, he could learn nothing of her.

Seeing, at length, that nothing was to be elicited, they wrote Lamberto to that effect, and the letter was despatched by Maurice, (who, having found another horse, was thus able to rejoin his master,) whose sorrow and regret at this result, cannot be expressed. He, in the meantime, was following the fortunes of Ferruccio, at Volterra, Pisa, and finally at Gavinana, and thus a space of time elapsed, in which the situation of Laudomia, and the other actors in this tale, underwent no sensible alteration. The ultimate events which afterwards afflicted the household of the Lapi, and with which our story is concluded, are closely bound up in the fate of the city, and the entire and final extinction of Florentine liberty; it is necessary, then, with free and rapid pencil, to sketch, to the eternal infamy of the victors, and the eternal glory of the vanquished, her expiring agony, and her final and complete subjugation.

Our picture will become pale and lifeless, compared with that left us by Varchi, so rich in color and in action. If we might give a word of advice to our reader, and, particularly, if he be an Italian, we would say, read the whole of Varchi's account, from beginning to end. But what if we have, instead, a lady reader? For we would have the Italian women also know the glory of our common country, that they may tell it betimes to their children. But how can we hope that they will not be frightened at the very sight of that great folio of the

had been surrendered to them or
erty should be held sacred, nor
they cut the throats of the who
maintained the defence, and in
and the service of the city dema

A cry of indignation and of
the news of this act of atrocity,
life ; and the soldiery, who burn
with the enemy, found their cap
march at their head. He order
one night to the number of abou
with spears and two-handed sw
intending to fall unexpectedly
them hand to hand.

Conferring with Malatesta on
him averse to the design. Th
gradually wasted by the hardsh
bold expeditions, (knowing, as h
the soldiers,) made him fear that
breaking up the enemy's camp.
cry of his own designs, he was f

On the night of the eleventh
and rainy, Stefano Colonna issu
Francesco, in the midst of h
lance in his hand, having cause
over his corslet, in order that th
in the darkness. To avoid ene

222 Still fighting, they pushed forward, no longer silent and concealed, but with a great uproar of shouts, tambours and trumpets, so that the whole camp were up and in arms; the Prince and other leaders, running here and there to make head against the enemy, and collect the routed and flying, and the Imperialists themselves now came to open combat. It now appeared time to Maria Orsino to give the appointed signal, and two discharges of artillery being fired, the troops destined for this purpose, rushed out from the surrounding gates, and furiously assaulted the camp on every side, so that the Prince, not knowing where to turn, seeing new foes coming down upon him in every direction, threw himself into the thickest of the fray, fighting desperately and anticipating death or defeat, and the result would have been as he expected, so admirably had the Florentine soldiery pressed upon the old and well-trained German and Spanish bands, if Malatesta, seeing himself within a hair of losing in one moment the fruit of his treachery, had not sounded the horn, which truly then sent forth a most sinister and doleful sound, and which, snatching the victory from the hands of these brave and generous citizens, summoned them to retreat.

The troops gradually and reluctantly withdrew, and returned in fine order without being followed or molested by the enemy, who congratulated themselves on a result so much better than they had expected.

This honorable engagement increased the courage of the Florentines, and made Malatesta aware of what he had reason to expect, unless he found means to thwart and prevent all such expeditions. And it is almost incredible, with what pretxts, frauds, and manœuvres he succeeded, to the very last of the siege, in effecting his villanous purpose, so that the soldiers either could not obtain a leader to conduct them to battle, or if they did, things were so arranged by the traitor, that without any advantageous result, the time was frittered away, until hunger, wounds, and death had reduced the citizens to such a state, that he could dispose of them according to his own wicked designs.

It is difficult to conceive how the Florentines could help seeing that they were sold. But history is full of such blindness on the part of people and governments, always the precursor and indicator of their ruin.

In the meantime, the period had arrived to confirm or change the *gonfaloniere*, and the election fell upon Raffaello Girolami, instead of Carduccio, who was the last to take his seat in the Palace.

of the cowardice of his conduct, the Emperor. It is the old curses of France, or to be more who play at ball with her.

But, to find an example of pe necessary at this time to cross tl

The Venetians themselves, promises and stipulations of the Cæsar, and the news of it being there had not been the slightest the excited citizens shouted in squares, that "that was Venice and unexpected strokes of ill from the ardor of their resolution utmost, but gave an additional and the noble pride of withstanding. By way of defence against times, extreme and sometimes upon, as, for instance, that with Palleschi.

Five officials were created, and a law was passed, which it meant, but which, in substance, granting the power of selling the straining the citizens to become spontaneously offer to do so, and with all justice, it had the power of

last desperation, had no other alternative than to take these unjust measures, or perish?

This appropriation not being sufficient to defray the insupportable expenses of the war, it was found necessary to lay hands upon the gold and silver of the churches, and of private individuals, who, with admirable promptitude, brought forward their gold and silver plate, the women, too, bringing their necklaces, bracelets and jewels to the mint, where a new coin was stamped of the value of a half ducat, having on one side, the *lily* and the initials "*S. P. Q. F.*," and on the reverse, "*Jesus Rex noster, et Deus noster.*"

In these donations of gold and silver to the necessities of the city, it is not to be supposed, that Niccolò remained behind the other citizens,—even to the little urn that contained the ashes of Savonarola! He would give even that, and the ashes were carefully collected, and put into one of the purses of silk and gold that were in Laudomia's *corredo*, and which she willingly offered and laid in the niche, in place of the casket.

To incite still more the universal zeal, the consolations and the pomp of religion were brought into requisition; the *Frati* of San Marco, particularly Fojano and Fivizzano, gave themselves no rest from preaching in the churches and public squares, pursuing the methods and following the spirit of Savonarola, and their warm and inspired words, rendered still more authoritative by the austerity of their mode of life, which, in these men shone with great purity, had no small share in producing the constant and vigorous efforts of the people of Florence, and these *Frati* knowing the power which things strange and unexpected have over the multitude, often made use of theatrical airs, as did Fojano, when, praying in the Consiglio, after a long and exciting harangue, he produced a standard, on one side of which was depicted Christ victorious, with many soldiers prostrate at his feet, and on the other, the Cross, and handing it to the *Gonfaloniere*, he ended by pronouncing the miraculous words heard by Constantine, and which predicted his victory.

The impulse given by these means to men already fired by the love of liberty and glory, showed itself not only in the engagements where many hastened to take their part, but also in honorable deeds of private individuals.

A soldier, perceiving one day, that the enemy were guarding an intrenchment, very remissly, mounted the walls alone, and climbing their earthen rampart, succeeded in snatching a standard that was planted on its summit, and bore it in safety to his comrades, amidst a perfect hail of bullets.

trunk which remained to him, while the other, with lance in enemy, made a pass at him, which weapon was tipped with iron, for hand by the impetuosity of the worsted in the conflict.

But of far greater moment were the circumstantial details. We whole description, were we not w by our unwillingness to increase what has been already published. told in a few words. The two had formerly been rivals for the wife of Niccolò Benintendi, who,

This man being now in camp, his rival, declaring him a traitor against his country. Bandini excuse not being admitted by him decide the matter by a personal combat. The stigma of being more crafty than of sword and dagger, without a *manapola* of mail in the right hand became Martelli's second, and Bandini.

They fought at Baroncelli, where Martelli killed Bandini.

and where they should be exposed to the greatest perils. Ottaviano Signorelli, with the bravest and best disciplined of the troops issuing from Porta S. Pier Gattolini, attacked the intrenchments of M. Uliveto, defended by Baracane at the head of the best infantry of Spain, while from Porta S. Friano, Bartolommeo dal Monte, and Ridolpho d'Asisi conducted other forces to the enemy's rear. On this occasion, also, the Florentine soldiery conducted themselves with the greatest bravery, and the Spanish captain being slain, they came very near putting to route the best soldiers then in Europe; but the enemy's numbers being constantly increased by fresh reinforcements sent by the Prince to repair their losses, they were at length obliged to retreat, and returned without any confusion to the city, leaving great numbers of their comrades dead on the field, among whom was Lodovico Machiavelli, son of the celebrated Niccolò. The unfavorable termination of this engagement, served Malatesta's turn to show that he was right in disapproving of their going out of the city to fight, and yet, was not sufficient to open the eyes of the Florentines to his concealed designs, for, on the contrary, he, having manifested a great desire to obtain the rank of Captain-General of the foreign military, an office which he had until then exercised without the express title, the Signoria resolved to satisfy him, not having been able to persuade Stefano Colonna to accept this title for himself.

In presence of all the people assembled in the public square, the Gonfaloniere and the Signoria ranged upon a rostrum, the staff of Captain-General was solemnly conferred upon Malatesta. In token of rejoicing, the *Marzocco* placed on an angle of the palace was adorned with garlands, and a crown of gold was placed upon his head. And the *exquisite* traitor, as Busini facetiously calls Malatesta, richly clothed, with a medal in his cap, on which was inscribed *Libertas*, pronounced a long oration, thanking the people, and professing himself ready to give his life to defend their liberties, with all the customary oaths and promises which always have deceived, and always will deceive the multitude.

While this traitor, intent on betraying the unconscious Florentines, was obtaining such honor, other traitors, of lower station, were, in divers ways, persecuted and punished, as it ordinarily falls to the lot of the least culpable, — the greater knaves with their more subtle cunning, knowing how to avoid it.

A great price was fixed upon the heads of several captains, who, with the companies under their command, had fled from

Fra Rigogolo, died on the
Lorenzo Soderini came to the
of being a spy of Baccio Val

In the meantime, the price
the care and efforts of the
more exorbitant. After havin
consumed all the grain suitabl
tants began to grind pulse for
who had any to grind.

To give an idea of the price
vision had risen, it will be su
horses killed in the skirmish
pound, that of an ass at one c
sous, and a rat at a *giulio* (abo
end of the siege, there were fe

At first, there was little diffi
which were constantly brought
people, allured by the great
city remaining open for severa
Fiesole. But, when a body of
in Polverosa, they took strict
Florence, and such were the
upon the poor country people, w
very soon, there was no one to
himself to such an undertaking.
imperial camp, describes in his
Pignotti,) the atrocious fact of

Commissary Ferruccio, confirmed them more and more in this purpose. He had made himself master of S. Miniato, as he had promised, being the first to mount the walls, which were taken by scaling. And the Volterrani, having rebelled and gone over to the Pope, he earnestly prayed the Signoria to send him to subdue them; desiring to do so speedily, in order to give no time for reinforcement to the Commissary, Bartolo Tebaldi, who, retiring within the fortress, defended himself with great bravery.

We have the good fortune to be able to offer to the public the very letter of Ferruccio* to the Signoria, in which he renders an account of his operations on this occasion.

To the Ten of the War.—We arrived here between midnight and one o'clock, and had to enter the fortress *a coups d'artillerie*, and when we had all arrived at the redoubt, I made all the infantry leap over it; and, having the saddles taken from the horses, had them introduced, one by one, into the citadel, giving orders for refreshing the troops a little; but upon the most thorough search through the fortress, I found there but six barrels of wine, and only bread enough to furnish half a loaf to each man, and no more; and I swear to God, that if I had not taken the precaution to order each man to take with him bread enough for two days, as also to bring with me two loads of salt, and twenty-five or thirty pioneers with pickaxes, and other things necessary in storming a town, together with a load of fine powder for the arquebuses, I should not have been able to prevent the conquerors from having been conquer'd without a combat. The troops being somewhat refreshed, I put them into battle array, and, having the gate opened towards the town, with banners unfurled, we assaulted them on three sides, on all of which our way was obstructed by intrenchments, in passing which, we lost fifty or sixty of our best men, but this did not prevent us from surmounting and taking possession of them, together with the Piazza di S. Agostino, where the enemy had made their stronghold, and what gave us the greatest annoyance, was being fired upon by their companies, who had cut passages through their houses, so that they could pass from one to the other, and thus inflict wounds without being wounded themselves. The enemy's forces, somewhat intimidated our infantry, by means of two demi-cannons, mounted on the trenches of the above-mentioned square, which, discharged in rapid succession, did considerable damage to our troops. Seeing this with my own eyes, I was forced to do that which it was not my office to do, and, buckling a shield on my arm, I attacked, dagger in hand, every one I saw turning back. Finally, with a body of well-armed light horse, each man with pike

* The copy is extracted from No. 17 of the Rucellai Library. I am happy to be able to acknowledge here my gratitude to the Marquis Rucellai, for the courtesy with which he has permitted me to make use of his library, now in charge of Signor Ajazz, a gentleman, in whom ability and culture are united in the highest degree.

our lines again, and prepared to re-
had been employed all night in the
caded the streets with several pieces
us from the expected encounter.
lost part of the town, and at seeing
and that so many who were Florentine
great Ruberto Acciaiuoli,* father of
and, this being granted, the Committee
of the town, came to speak with me.
I answered them, that I wished to
masters, either by force or by fair means,
my own breast what of good or evil
they then asked two hours' time to
town, and said they would return
willing to agree to, as I saw they were
succor that was on the way, should
return within their trenches, and
they did not return within a half an hour
I would make a trial of acquiring
had done thus far. They went,
bringing with them besides, the Count
their highest officer. Upon arriving
power, and added, that the Volterrane
to me and my discretion. And so
my honor, to save the life of the Count.
And I immediately made them pass
our troops, and set them outside of
to me, that in these times, Taddeo
tance to be suffered to be at large, I
that this will give no displeasure
word of honor, that he shall suffer

of the town, and issued a proclamation, that every Volterrano found with arms in his hands, should be condemned to the gallows. To-day, I shall institute a search, and I shall deprive them of all weapons, that they may no longer be able to use them against us as they have done. To-day, also, I shall make proclamation, to have all the corn exhibited for inspection; for I understand there is a great abundance of it; and the flour which may be ground, and the other grains, I shall have to put into the citadel, as speedily as possible, and all the artillery, sent by Andrea Doria, which it seems they had had made on purpose for our benefit.

"The artillery taken from Ruberto, consists of two seventy-pounders, and two culverins, the finest and best managed pieces of artillery I ever saw, a demi-cannon, and one field piece; making the number of six big guns, with eighty balls, a little powder and saltpetre; and to-morrow, at eight o'clock, I shall send a summons to Pomerance, and another to Monte Catini, and I shall inform you of the result, on the day following. When it shall appear time to your worship, to give me orders to put my cavalry in motion towards Marzanna, to liberate Campiglia, Bibiena, Buti, and all the country in that vicinity, and drive away those highway robbers, who have taken up their abode there, and when I shall have heard of the passage of Fabrizzio, by the way of Pisa, I will not fail to send those forces which I can spare at that time, neither will I fail to send a company to Empoli, to render it more secure, although it is so situated, that the women could guard it with their distaffs. I have nothing more to add, except to pray that you may vouchsafe to sanction my promise to Giudecci, and this will be sufficient reward for all my labors.

"July 15, 1530.

"The names of the knaves who induced the revolt of the populace, are these:

"Agnolo di Donato Capponi, Giuliano Salviati, and a certain Giovanni di—der Rossi. Leonardo Buondelmonti, brother of the cavalier, and Ruberto Acciajoli, father of the whole."

The inhabitants of Volterra were thus forced to return under the yoke of Florence, and a yoke it might truly be called, since, deprived of every liberty, and anything but well-treated, they were allowed no part in the deliberations of state. The unjust course pursued towards them, as well as towards Pisa, Pistoja, and the other cities under the jurisdiction of Florence, prevented them from joining with alacrity in the defence, and also increased the troubles of the Florentines, who were obliged to employ strong forces to keep them in subjection. So true is it, that the oppression of the weak generates sparks which may smoulder, unknown and unheeded, for a long time, but which finally burst into a blaze, and consume the oppressor.

Of this truth, Florence offers us a sad example, and the just admiration with which her last defence inspires us, will not

prevent us from acknowledging the guilt and the error which contributed to her ruin. Will it be believed, that this phrase was then in the mouth of statesmen : " Pisa is to be held by fortresses, and Pistoja by parties " ? Will it be believed, that the cruel stratagem of so exciting the mutual hatred of the Cancelliere and the Panciatica parties, that they deluged the plain and mountain of Pistoja with blood, could have been called reasons of state ? (*ragion di stato.*) And, can it be believed, that it was not only deemed discreet, but lawful and honorable to use such means ? But how discreet this was in the Florentines, the fact showed at the end of the siege, when, had Ferruccio been able to arrive under the walls of Florence, it would have been almost impossible not to have saved it ; but he, partly deceived, partly persuaded by Captain Melocchi of San Marcello, who was more intent upon destroying his enemies, the Panciatichi than upon delivering Florence, delayed his march so long, that, arriving in an evil hour, he was assaulted and put to rout, as we shall see, by the Imperialists. This was the harvest reaped by the Florentines, from their subtle and shrewd *reasons of state* !

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE joy diffused throughout Florence by the submission of Volterra, was soon disturbed by the loss of Empoli, which, left by Ferruccio, in guard of Andrea Giugni and Piero Orlandini, was, through their dastardly conduct, taken by storm, and sacked by the Imperialists. After accomplishing this enterprise, they directed their march towards Volterra, led by the Marquis del Vasto, Inigo Sarmiento, and other captains, and, uniting their forces with those of Fabrizio Maramalda, they closely besieged the town, hoping to retake it from Ferruccio, who, undismayed by the superior forces of the enemy without, or the little reliance he could have upon the citizens within, defended himself so staunchly, that at length, after great slaughter, the Imperialists raised the siege, and withdrew from the walls. Then might be seen how the heart of one single man, like the spark falling upon a heap of powder, is sufficient to enkindle thousands. The Florentines, inflamed by the bold and daring exploits of Ferruccio, notwithstanding a new and terrible enemy was now added to their other troubles, in the *plague*, which, having made its appearance in the monastery, was beginning to spread through the city, resolved to issue forth anew against the Germans, who, under Count Lodovico di Lodrone, had taken up their quarters in San Donato, in Polverosa.

Objecting and opposing, as usual, Malatesta did not give his consent, until he saw himself alone against the universal opinion, and then the expedition was decided upon, and orders were issued that it should be executed *a modo d'incamiciata*, that is, with the shirt worn over the outside garments. Stefano Colonna issued from the gate of Faenza with two thousand infantry, armed with pikes and huge partizans; from the gate at the Prato Pasquino, Corso, with his column, and, passing through the little gate, Malatesta had arrayed his army, consisting of fifteen hundred foot-soldiers, along the bank of the Arno, in order to prevent the enemy from fording the river, and attacking their assailants in the rear.

It wanted two hours of day, and by reason of the intense heat, the enemy were immersed in sleep. Coming upon Pasquino rather in advance of their orders, the Florentine troops had awakened the guard of the outer intrenchment, and raised a din, which, heard by Signor Stefano, caused him to hasten on to the assault. Surmounting every obstacle, and driving before him the Germans, who, confused and sleepy, defended themselves in a most disorderly manner, their terror and confusion, greatly augmented by great quantities of grenades thrown in among them by Giovanni da Torina, Stefano arrived with his men and attacked the monastery.

The Count of Lodrone had, in the meantime, assembled a knot of two thousand Germans, who, with pikes levelled, stood ready to defend themselves from the furious assaults of Ivo Biliotti, (who, as Varchi says, with his head down, as was his custom, threw himself upon the enemy, crying to his men, "Up, my brave fellows, let's be in the thickest of it!") and of the other Florentine captains, who fought that night with such desperate zeal, as to be long a source of marvel to the old and experienced soldiers, who could ill withstand so much fury. While the battle was raging obstinately, and to the discomfiture of the German lansquenets, it had become broad daylight, and the noise being heard in the camp of the Prince, he immediately despatched a numerous troop of horse, in aid of his men, and, although it was Malatesta's business to repulse them, and oppose their fording the river, by doing which, every little impediment he could throw in the way of their succoring their comrades, would have aided the triumph of the Florentines, instead of this, he withdrew his forces within the walls, like a traitor, as he was, and sent orders to Signor Stefano to sound a retreat.

Thus basely abandoned, the soldiers were forced to obey the command, to avoid being taken in the midst of the enemy, and, constantly turning the face to the enemy, who had little disposition to molest them, they withdrew, in good order, within the gates, and, at last, somewhat suspicious of the designs of Malatesta, the people began to whisper of treachery, and to mistrust his doings.

But the perception of mischief, and the will to remedy it, came late. Malatesta, long foreseeing the possibility of becoming suspected, and even discovered, had so managed matters, that the event should not find him unprovided or unarmed.

In conversing with the most reputable citizens, he had known how to gain them over to himself, whatever might be

their opinion in politics, "and to the populace" (*popolani*;) (we use the words of Busini,) "he talked of liberty, to the malecontents of the pope, to the ambitious, he blamed these and those, and lauded an aristocracy," &c., and with such arts, having succeeded in persuading each party among the citizens, that he sympathized with it, he never lacked defenders from the accusations heaped upon him by the general voice, as, in the end, there were never wanting those among the citizens, more sinned against than sinning, who actually aided him in carrying out his base designs.

Besides, beginning to perceive that the Signoria doubted his integrity, he had quitted the Serristori palace, and taken up his lodgings in the house of the Bini, under pretence of its being more convenient for the demands of the siege, but, in reality, to be nearer the Porta Romano, whose well-armed and well-stocked tower was in the hands of his own party, who could assist him, when hard pressed, as they actually did.

He did not often show himself out of doors, and when he did go out, he was well accompanied, keeping up a strong guard, night and day, around his lodgings, and, when summoned to the Palagio, either refusing to go, or, if he did go, filling up the great door of entrance, and the stairways, with a great number of his soldiers, fearing, as he said, he should have to make the leap of Baldaccio d'Anghiari.*

Thus relieved from the fear of being overpowered, and, it appearing to him that things were prepared, and the occasion ripe, he disposed himself with new intrigues, to seize the fruits of his treachery. Ferruccio, who, from Volterra had passed on through Maremma to Pisa, and on whom now rested the final hopes of the republic, had received orders to march to Florence, and, it is not to be doubted, that, had he assaulted the imperial camp at the same time that the soldiers from the city attacked it in front, he would have finally succeeded in raising the siege.

Malatesta, who, more than any one else, was certain that this would be the result of such an enterprise, managed, by means of one of his trustworthy villains, called Cencio Guercio, to obtain a secret interview with the Prince of Orange, under the walls, outside the Porta Romana. What arrangements were made between them, it was never actually known, but it

* Captain of the infantry. Coming under the suspicions of the Signoria, he was summoned to the Palazzo, and there put to death, and his body thrown from the windows into the square. His widow was the virtuous Anna Lena, founder of the convent of this name, where she retired after the death of her husband, and there ended her days.

seems, that the traitor, giving the Prince notice of the movement of Ferruccio, promised him not to molest the Imperialists while on their way to meet the Commissary; and he gave him this promise in a note written by his own hand. It is a fact, that this note was found on the corpse of the Prince, slain a few days after. The plan of Malatesta was most effectually carried out, and, with the rout of Gavinana, Orange and Ferruccio both being left dead upon the field, vanished the last hopes of salvation that remained to the Florentines. The sequel of this story will afford us an opportunity to return to the particulars of this memorable battle, but, first, we must seek out again the actors in our tale, for the history of public events, thus far narrated, brings us to an epoch, in which the affairs of the Lapi family, the principal subject of our work, seem to us deserving of some attention.

The evening of the 4th of August was intensely sultry in Florence, and the inert and heated air seemed obscured and rendered dense by a reddish, dusty haze, which impeded respiration. The sun's disk, drawing up the vapors in the horizon, looked purple and monstrous, from the magnifying effect of the overhanging exhalations, and only the tops of the edifices were tinged with a sanguinary hue, that was fast disappearing. Between the four massive columns, placed by the daring ingenuity of Arnolfo di Lapo, on the tower of the Palagio, as a support to its fortress, the big bell of the consiglio, on which was sculptured in a circle these words: "*Mentem sanctam, spontaneam ad Dei gloriam, et patriae liberationem (habeto).*" was suddenly seen to shake, swing slowly, and then, showing its vast mouth, to be more rapidly agitated, until the heavy clapper struck the first blow in its walls of bronze, and a sonorous and prolonged vibration was communicated to the air, followed by a thousand others in quick succession, for now it was ringing most furiously.

This sound, which, for centuries, and in so many different positions of the city, had called the citizens to treat of the honor or of the perils of the country, was now heard on an occasion more grievous and tremendous than had ever threatened the state. News had been received at the Palagio, of the rout of Gavinana, and of the death of Ferruccio, whom the Piagnoni called the new Gideon, and with whom was annihilated every hope of succor from without. The faces of the citizens assembled in crowds in the public square and the streets leading to it, blackened by the sun, and by the smoke of so many battles, furrowed with scars, and so reduced by famine and hardships that they looked like skulls covered with a wrinkled skin, bore

the emblems of a struggle, profound and desperate, but indomitable and ferocious. After so many conflicts, so many victories, so many perilous and even successful sallies, just as they were on the point of harvesting the fruits of their toil, just as every one was expecting to hear, "The Commissary is in sight, — he attacked the enemy, — he fought, — has conquered, — he is coming through the Porta di Faenza, — here he is, — we are saved!" to hear instead, the terrible words, "The army is defeated, and he is killed!" To many, it seemed absolutely impossible! for there are some lives, so venerated and so glorious, that it does not seem possible, that a ball or a sword can dare to cut them off! However, the fact was certain, the sentence irrevocable, the idea often unconsciously cherished, but which always, and on all occasions, had served as a last refuge to vacillating hopes, the thought, "Ferruccio is living!" this thought, this idea, was at once plucked from every breast, leaving in its place, the tremendous certainty of imminent and irreparable ruin. And, in effect, what hope remained to this miserable, ruined people, abandoned by all, pressed from without by the arrogant power of Charles V. and the Pope; and within, a prey to famine, plague, and treachery? How could they longer bear up under prolonged hardships, when their wives, the aged, and the children were sinking before their eyes? How resolve to encounter new perils, to prolong the long and useless agony, which was so certain to result fatally? What could have been the resolution of the most generous, most suffering, the most daring in such an extremity, if not to yield to necessity and surrender themselves? What was the resolution of the Florentines? what, the cry that arose from the whole community? To defend themselves, and that to the last!

In the Piazza di Palazzo, which then still preserved its august and antique simplicity, and which was not then, as now, ornamented with the fountain of Ammanato, nor the groups of Cellini and Gian di Bologna: amidst a crowd of people of all ages and conditions, old men, soldiers, foreign leaders, young men, monks, youths of the militia, almost all, being more or less armed, the agitation was excessive, the fatal news was in the mouth of every one, a hollow, fearful hum rose on the air, interrupted from time to time by louder tones, now of prayer, now of imprecation or of blasphemy, and as usual on such occasions, little circles were formed about those whose speech was the most prompt and to the purpose, and if various were the remedies and the modes proposed, the end was always the same, to fight and to defend themselves.

Under the projecting roof of the Pisani, opposite the Ring-

hiera, the crowd was denser than elsewhere, the attention more reverent, the silence more undisturbed ; and, from the centre of this knot of people, towered by a full head, the tall, imposing figure of Niccolò, who, with hand on high, and casting around a glance of imperturbable confidence, was saying :

“ Yes, my people, the army is defeated — Messer Ferruccio is dead. But what of that? Think you, that the arm of the Lord will be shortened, or, that His hand will lose all strength by the death of one man? Think you, that the Almighty will now be at a loss to find means to aid us? Think you, He assumed an obligation greater than He had the means of fulfilling, in promising us so much? Oh! ye of little faith (he repeated in a louder tone) — of little faith! Who sets in motion, who puts to flight, who gives victory to armies, if not God? And when He still remains to you, when He, by the mouth of His prophets, has sworn to be on your side, are you disturbed because a few arms have failed in your behalf? Can you tell me of how many the Lord had need, to effect the destruction of Sennacherib and his army? How many to save Betulia? You hope in man, but you ought to hope in *Him*, in *Him* alone, who has promised to defend you, who has promised you all know it: to send even His angels to fight for you.* It required the extremity of peril, in order that His glory might be made manifest! The peril has arrived, it is immense! Bow your foreheads to the earth, then, (and here he and all the people fell upon their knees.) God! Let us all cry God! Christ our King, henceforth we confide in thee alone! To thee it belongs now, to confound thy enemies, that they may not mock us by saying, ‘Behold how their God helps them!’ To us it belongs to fight, and, if necessary, to die! Up, then!’ he exclaimed, rising from his knees; ‘Up, then! to arms! to battle! and let us all swear to die a hundred times, rather than surrender once!’”

During this harangue, some raised their hands on high in the attitude of prayer, some smote their breasts, some trembled, some sobbed, and at the last words of the venerable old man, a howl, fierce and discordant as thunder, burst from a thousand voices, which, in a thousand ways, repeated the proposed oath. And this cry, so loud and sudden, was followed by a long and deep murmur of stirring words, of menaces, of strange and tremendous propositions, and many voices were heard flinging out here and there, the exclamation, “Ah! traitor Malatesta!”

* Varchi, Book ii. page 420, says: “And to the Piagnone, who had affirmed that Ferruccio was Gideon, and he must without fail, be victorious and liberate Florence, there was no other hope left but that of the angels.”

sounding exactly like that low, distant rumble, which is heard among the hills after the first burst of thunder.

The same scene, which took place here under the gallery of the Pisani, was repeated in other parts of the public place, where the people were harangued here and there by the monks of San Marco, particularly by Fojano and Fivizzano, with the same impetuosity, and to the same purpose, so that, according to the account given of these popular orators, the shouts and the uproar no sooner died away in one place, than they began again in another.

The agitation was increased, if increase was possible, by this fortuitous accident: a poor boy of the lowest class, who, as was afterwards learned, had been abandoned for many months without any shelter whatever, his father, a clothier, having died in battle, and his mother of starvation; this boy pressed by necessity, had observed a place on one side of the palace towards the custom-house, where a drain, coming from the kitchens of the Signoria, emptied itself into the ground, and there being a cleft in the spout, the miserable boy had caught sight of certain vegetables that from the washings of the dishes, passed through this conduit, and, exerting himself to enlarge the opening, he had then covered it up as well as he could, in order that no one might see and snatch from him his sole and ultimate means of subsistence, and, coming here every evening, he found, stopped by several sticks which he had placed across the spout, a small quantity of fruit parings, bones, pulse, and other refuse, with which he sustained his miserable life. This evening he had come there as usual, completely exhausted, for this wretched fare hardly sufficed to keep the breath of life in the poor boy, but, supporting himself by the walls, he had been able to reach the place. But this day in the Palagio, in the confusion consequent upon the ill-fated news of the defeat, either the dinner and supper had been forgotten, or whatever the cause might be, nothing had been thrown into the drain, and the poor unhappy orphan, whose strength was nearly spent, found nothing, and falling flat on his face beside the drain, he uttered a low, hoarse cry, and having no other means of relieving himself, digging with his nails into the wall, he tore away a few blades of half-withered dog-grass that were growing there, and thrust them into his mouth, and while he tried to masticate them with his feeble jaws, he was seen to fall on his side, his wasted limbs twitched convulsively for a moment, and then ceased to move.

This scene being accidentally observed by some persons, they went up to him, and attempting to raise him from the ground, found him quite dead, and a Frate happening to be present, he

was carried away by him through the midst of the public place, just at the moment when the people were the most inflamed and excited by the words of Niccolò and the other orators. The piteous spectacle of this little corpse, carried thus in the arms of the Frate, with legs and arms dangling, head hanging downwards, the lips livid and soiled by the green juices of the grass, which he still held between his teeth, tightly closed by his last convulsions, moved the hearts of these poor people, who, in this unhappy object, saw represented the fate of their children and of themselves.

"Rather than die in this fashion," some cried, "let us die by the arquebus! Ah, dog!—ah, renegade Chimenti!" said another. "Ah! traitor,—assassin of thy country! And Binda, who was among these, said, angrily:

"What say you? Of all the sallies we have made against the enemy, have we ever once been repulsed or defeated? Have we not always returned to Florence, because it seemed to be our duty, or, (to speak more correctly,) through default of that traitor of a Malatesta? Eh! let all who wish to go forth to fight, cry out; let us come to an agreement between ourselves, and, it must be, that the Signoria, up in the palace, will grant our request."

Through these words, and so many concurring causes, louder and more terrible became the tumult and the cry of the people, who demanded battle, and many, leaping upon the steps rising from beneath the Custom-house and leading to the main entrance to the palace, seemed about to rush upon the guards, to enter and disturb the deliberations of the assembled council. Afar off, the waves of this immense crowd were seen surging in this one direction, amid the insolent agitation of the pikes of the soldiers, who endeavored to repel their encroachments; but what restored a little order in this confusion, was a rumor, which, all at once, ran among the crowd, that it was voted to attack the trenches. At this news, a thousand cries rose in the air, of "*Vira il Signori! Vira il Marzocco!*" And as the fiercely-lashed waves, upon the going down of the wind, fall soon, but not immediately, so continued, for a brief space, the din and confusion, then, by little and little, it being now pitch dark, the crowd thinned off, the shouts and murmurs died away, and the citizens joyful, and inspired by new hopes, returned to their homes, leaving the square mute and deserted.

Together with the others, and mixed up with those who came through Vacchereccia and Mercatenuovo, came also Troilo in the direction of the Ponte Vecchio. Since we have occupied ourselves with his affairs, he has been quite too much occupied in

the villanous business which had brought him to Florence, and for which he had sold himself to Baccio Valori: and, although at first he had shown himself sufficiently remiss and averse to the scheme, as we mentioned, partly from the remains of a repugnance to such knavery, partly because the life he should be forced to lead in Florence, was odious to him, at length, by little and little, trampling under foot every scruple, he had well learned how to gain the price of his treachery.

From the roof of the house of Nobili, when occasion required it, he made signals to those in the camp with white napkins by day, and torches by night: he had aided a secret correspondence between Baccio and Malatesta, placing the letters in a loop-hole without the gate at San Gallo, where a messenger from the camp came directly for them by night. Instructed by Malatesta, he had ingratiated himself with the young men belonging to the militia, especially with those of the party of Niccolò Capponi, who, being of the upper ranks, though concurring indeed with the rest of the people in the defence, still cherished their old jealousy of the plebeians, and fearing that the government might not fall entirely into their own hands, they offered inducements to those who might wish to detach themselves from the common interest to join their party.

Troilo, without betraying himself, and still pretending moral zeal for the Piagnoni party than for any other, had, with great art, managed to drop a few words which poisoned minds already excited, thus dexterously urging them on to schemes, that they would not have dared to express openly. Pretending to be thoughtful above all things of the good of his country, he would sometimes stand, as if absorbed in thought, and then say, with a sigh, "We shall conquer, the siege will be ended, there is no doubt, but *then*"—and here he would check himself, and being urged to explain himself, he would add, in a grave tone, "Then, God grant that this people may not become puffed up with pride, may not do anything dishonest—not abuse the victory." With these and similar insinuations, and also from the fact of belonging himself to the upper class, he had gotten into their favor, and with the same arts, appropriate to the different humors that divided the citizens, he was generally received and had in great esteem by all, and Niccolò himself, notwithstanding his long experience and his former success, was now entirely satisfied with regard to him, and placed in his full confidence.

Troilo, this evening, on finding himself among the people, had done as the others; he had shouted, howled and beaten his

breast like the most zealous Piagnone, but, at the same time, he was attentively noting the gestures and countenances of those among the citizens, who appeared to participate in these acts of vehemence, more through fear of falling under the suspicions of the people, than because they held the same opinions, and, when the crowd began to disperse, seeing a numerous group of young men, gathered a little apart from the rest, under the gallery of the Orgagna, among whom were Morticino, Alessandro de' Pazzi, Daniele degli Alberti, Giannozzo de' Nerli, and many others of the first families of Florence; of that very class, he was most intent upon seducing. Troilo made up to them, and after much reasoning, in which he magnified the bold resolve to go out to battle, and protested to be ready to die a thousand times for liberty, dexterously gave them to understand that it would be more disinterested in the *great*, to embrace this resolution than in the *popolani*, because, in case the *state* gained the victory, it would remain in the hands of the *popolani*, and in the event of its being conquered, either, the enemy on taking possession of the city would put it to sack, and the rich would lose more than the poor, or, if there should be a compromise, it would, without doubt, fall upon the rich to pay the indemnity, which would, doubtless, be required from the citizens as a punishment for so obstinate and mad a defence, so that, at any rate, the *great* would lose and the *populace* would gain, and he ended by saying, "So much the greater will be your virtue in fighting."

But these young men, knowing the truth of what he said, and, in view of their loss, caring little about such virtue, feeling somewhat irritated, made no answer, and Troilo secretly enjoyed the success of his malice. What we have written, was but a small part of his manœuvres, but we have mentioned enough to give some idea of his disposition and his arts.

Then, leaving the public place, and coming to the Ponte Vecchio, it being already night, he took his way to the palace of Malatesta. The entrances to the adjacent streets, and that of the Via Maggio, from whence he came, were held by the guard, who, recognizing him, allowed him to pass; and, on his arriving at the great door, which he found closed, and guarded by many soldiers, he was admitted, and went in search of Maestro Barlaam, who usually introduced him secretly to Malatesta.

Crossing the court-yard, he saw on one side, at the farther extremity, and so placed, that it might be seen by whoever passed through the street, — he saw, I say, an ass, skinned, and hanging by the hind legs, as is done with calves and oxen in the shambles.

By this exhibition, Malatesta wished to give the people to understand, that he suffered no less than others, the privations of the siege, and that he fed upon this vile flesh; how much truth there was in this, we shall soon see. In the new quarters of the Captain-General, Maestro Barlaam was as well lodged as possible, care being always taken that, through certain secret passages, he should be within reach of his master. His rooms here, also, were on the lower floor, but not having those accommodations for his laboratory which the Palazzo Serristori offered him, his goods were still in confusion, and tossed in heaps in the corners of the room which he occupied. As Troilo entered, he found him busied in arranging them, and in this employment he was aided by Selvaggia. Both saluted him as they would one who had been but a short time absent.

Several months had passed away since we left Selvaggia on the road to Empoli, as the reader knows, and although nothing of importance had happened to her in this interval, it is, however, well for the better understanding of the story, that we say a few words concerning her now.

Maestro Barlaam, seeing her re-appear so soon, and when he least expected her, for she had come directly to his lodgings, and dismounted there, and who was in terror lest she had come to storm him with new demands and new bursts of passion, was soon re-assured, by her telling him resolutely that she had changed her mind in thought and feeling; that she had at last discovered, how unworthy of her love was that wretch for whom she had endured so many hardships, and so much suffering, she told how he had treated her, what words of mockery she had been forced to hear, and, swearing to revenge herself upon him, at whatever cost, she promised her father henceforth to serve him in everything, and to obey none but him, provided he would aid her to obtain this so much desired vengeance. No longer exhibiting the haughty and ferocious manner which formerly distinguished her, she now appeared docile and dispirited, and the Maestro, considering that such a determined spirit might sometimes subserve his own ends, received her benignly, telling her that he was highly pleased to find she had returned to reason, and as to avenging herself, if she would give him time to think, and leave him to seize the occasion he would, perhaps, do it in such a way as would satisfy her.

Without wishing to say more, not yet trusting to her decision, he went on entertaining her, until, finding her still equal to her former self, and growing still more violent in her wish to revenge herself upon Lamberto, he, one day, laughingly told

her of the invented tale he had imposed upon her the first evening that she met with Troilo and Messer Benedetto, telling her their true names and rank, and adding that he was not willing to tell her then, for fear that when she saw Lamberto, she would reveal everything.

Selvaggia, having many opportunities of meeting Troilo, and of talking with him, the discourse had several times turned upon Lamberto, and Selvaggia, showing a great deal of feeling when speaking of him, and no less inclination to do something to vex him, Troilo, seeing that the thing might be turned to his account, had added fuel to the fire, thinking that no one in the world could so stand by him and aid in his designs as this so much offended and enraged woman. And having, partly from herself and partly from her father, learned something of her past life, and of her desperate and terrible nature, he was persuaded, that in the heart of a woman of such a temperament, the hatred and love of vengeance excited by rejected love, must produce sure and terrible effects, and that in his design of robbing Lamberto of his Laudomia, he could not find a more efficient auxiliary. He knew not yet, (to tell the truth,) in what way he should have to make use of her, but, foreseeing the end of the siege, and the moment in which the household of the Lapi should find themselves in extremity, as well as the other *popolani*, he thought, "I shall get an opportunity, and between two spirits who, like Selvaggia, are resolutely determined on the same thing, it will be hard if something do not come of it."

"Quick, quick, Maestro," said Troilo upon entering, and without answering his salutation, "conduct me to Signor Malatesta, for there is much to be done, and no time to be lost."

Barlaam started forward, and, as he was going out with Troilo, the latter said, turning to Selvaggia:

"Be of good cheer, Selvaggia, for since the conflict has been decided upon, our Messere must needs soon be forthcoming, and then it will be *our* turn, and each one can have his share."

And he went away without waiting for a reply.

He found Malatesta in a private parlor, where he was just finishing his supper, having before him several small dishes containing the remains of the viands, which, from the bones, appeared to have been composed of capons and wild game, and not of asses' flesh. With his elbow resting upon the arm of his easy-chair, he was picking his teeth, with his head inclined downward, and the light of the candle which was burning in the centre of the table, fell upon the tightly-drawn and discol-

one's pericranium which reflected its rays as if it had been of yellow ivory.

Opposite him, were seated Messer Benedetto de' Nobili, and Baccio Valori, who, several times during the siege, and at the risk of great personal discomfort and peril, had come secretly to visit him. All three raised their faces towards Troilo, whom they were expecting with the greatest impatience, to learn from him the latest news, and Malatesta, who wished to appear of unshaken courage, though on his brow and in his glance, there wandered a shade of inquiet suspicion, not unmingled with fear, said, forcing a smile:

"Indeed, you are welcome. Well, what say the Piagnoni of their Gideon?"

"They say — they say —" answered Troilo, shaking his head with an air that signified it is no time to joke, "they say that they can do without him; and they are more full of the devil than ever."

"Let them stay with him," answered Malatesta, contemptuously shrugging his shoulders, "by all accounts, we shall soon be able to brush this fly from our noses. And in the public square what has been done?"

"It has been a complete hell there. My very palate still pains me after such a howling: for, to play the Piagnone, one must have lungs and a wind-pipe, that I can assure you. In fact, our famous old man, and the Frati and Fojano and all, preaching and setting the others on, and the people acting as if they were going to a wedding. There were shoutings, howlings and smittings of the breast, — and the conclusion is fixed upon, for if it had not been rumored that it was voted in the Palazzo to go out to battle, I believe that those devils would have cut the Signori in pieces."

"And now?"

"Now all have gone home to prepare for the festival of to-morrow."

"Oh! the *Marzocco* erects his hairs in cursed earnest this time. And what if I do not choose to go out?"

"They will perpetrate some diablerie, I am afraid, and will force you to do so."

"And what if I should resign my commission, and leave them to do their best, with this army upon them, which thinks and dreams only of plunder?"

"In the excited state they are now in, and as I saw them this evening, I would not vouch for their allowing you to finish what you might have to say, or that they would not undertake to do their business for themselves."

mainly what are they doing? W

"What would you have them do. He who might have wished was valiant this evening, and home in safety. However, this done. Courage! compose your many banners will wave in the c have their chests well lined wit to die by the hands of the *bisogni* and therefore they will hold to tl atesta, who wishes to do things promised them an oligarchical i just what they want. Is it not not believe that the Pope will w. he will be willing to place the po

"And therefore," he added, s himself generous in fulfilling his to as few rulers as may be, and i end in the supremacy of *one* r watched so narrowly."

CHAPTER XXVII.

NEITHER of the three made any reply to the suggestive words of Troilo, for these old foxes trusted little to each other, and they were well aware that their patrons were not always willing to have their knavery so openly discussed, even among the confidants entrusted with its execution.

Therefore, Baccio, giving a turn to the conversation, said, "Luckily for us, we are rid of Ferruccio, who might have annoyed us so much. I have written to his Beatitude* of the death of the Prince, it will grieve him greatly, I am certain, the death of so valorous a Signor; but since the will of God and the fortunes of war have taken him from this life, holy man as he is, he will bear this misfortune with proper resignation. But we are not yet free from suspicion. Signor Malatesta," he said, (as if recommending himself,) "now is the time to be awake and on the alert. Only think, if the Imperialists, now that the Prince is gone, and Don Ferrante, the new Captain, has no great authority, — only think, for the love of God, if they should play us a trick; for, on the slightest occasion, these people might mutiny and insist upon making the attack, and, if they should succeed, they would serve Florence as they did Rome three years ago. And if we give Florence pillaged to his Beatitude, you know how he would like that. And it may also happen that the army, repulsed from the walls, will disband and go about their business, and that would be still worse, so we must think of that."

"And don't you suppose we *do* think about it?" said Malatesta, impatiently. "Come, Messer Baccio, return to the camp as soon as you can, and amuse those people by assuring them that the Florentines will not hear of capitulation, — thus the soldiers will still keep up their hopes of booty, — and so long as they can hope for that, they will not make any movement. And as for these furious Florentines, leave the care of them to

* For the better understanding of the expressions of Baccio, it is necessary to know, that it was suspected, that the Prince was killed by order of some one, who feared he would assume the sovereignty of Florence.

head and shining. I have cured
crty, either by gold, or the fear
old man, Niccolò, must be of dif
for they say he has his coffers fu
not. It is no use to reckon up

"Oh!" said Troilo, whose co
preposterous such an idea mus
all the light you have to depen
the dark. Just conceive of su
for discussion."

Nobili's mouth watered, when
florins, and he said :

"For the love of God, do ne
You recollect, Messer Baccio, t
pecting Niccolò — and since w
glad to remind you of it — for t
Signor Malatesta desires, to co
the aristocracy, at this time —
least suspicion awakened, our
am content to run this risk, I
recollect —"

"Yes, yes, you know I have
interrupted Valori, irritated by his

"For my part," said Troilo,
for money, I meant something
I will tell you what to do for
not trouble you, for you have
will only say this, that I have a

row, and I would not fail to be at home at the hour of prayer, for I would not go to bed like the dogs, in your fashion — and then — and then, it is well to lay up a store of devotion, so that I shall not have to trouble myself about things of that sort, after I get out of the house of the Lapi."

Malatesta arose, and, opening a large chest, took from it a purse of money, and gave it to Troilo, saying :

" On going out, you will give these, with my service, to Cencio, who will distribute them to the soldiers, so that every one may have his share ; and tell him not to let them be without wine — not too much, however, — I would not have them drunk. Now go, and be discreet and faithful, as is good for you. And give me notice of anything that may occur, for the success or ruin of this undertaking may depend on the merest trifle."

Troilo and Nobili, then left the room, and, descending into the court-yard, consigned the money to Cencio, and departed. After a few steps, they separated, each going in quest of those whom he was commissioned to seduce and draw over to Malatesta's party.

While they were attending to these machinations, Niccolò, who had left the public square at the same time with the rest of the crowd, had already been at home some time.

His limbs, weakened by the fatigues, the cares, and, especially, by the bitter grief he experienced, on account of the defeat and death of Ferruccio, grief which he had been obliged to repress, in the presence of the people, for fear of disheartening them, and which, on that very account, was all the more poignant within, the wretched old man, upon entering his room, flung himself in his great chair, and, with head buried in his hands, his soul darkened by fatal presentiments, and harassed by alternate hopes and fears, with regard to the prophecies of the Frate, he remained silent, and, from time to time, breathed a long, deep sigh.

Seated a little apart, with downcast visage, and hands clasped upon her knees, poor Laudomia was silently weeping. Her cheeks, in these dark months, had become thin and pale, for a life of constant agitation, a continual dread of receiving the tidings of Lambert's death, was gradually exhausting her life. And now, after this defeat, the particulars of which she was ignorant, save that nearly three thousand persons had lost their lives, to remain with the tremendous uncertainty, as to whether he was living or dead. To have no means of going out — to know no one of whom she could inquire. " Only think," she said, " he would be sure to throw himself into the

greatest danger. Would he have been willing to have left the side of Ferruccio? Alas! alas! am I then never to see him more?"

Then she would set herself to calculating, how soon he might re-appear, if he were still alive — she would think of the difficulty of entering Florence — of the possibility of his being alive, but wounded, abandoned, she knew not where, or in whose hands.

All these thoughts were as so many sharpened arrows, piercing and remaining fixed in her heart, and to find means of supporting this intolerable anguish, she would say, putting on a little hopefulness, "He may come this very evening. I shall expect him to-morrow noon. But, if he should not come then." And she continued to weep, smothering her sobs and sighs, so as not to add to the grief of her father, whom she could see through her tears, in an attitude of deep affliction.

It would have been grateful to her feelings, at this moment, to throw herself at his feet, to embrace him, to shed into his bosom, the floods of tears which she was striving to suppress, but always, in all moments, Laudomia thought more of her friends than of herself. All at once, the tremendous suspicion assailed her, that her father might have heard of Lamberto's death, and not knowing how to break the news to her, was giving her to understand this, by this silence, and these deep sighs.

The poor girl could no longer control herself; she threw herself at Niccolò's knees, and, bursting into sobs, said:

"Oh! papa! then they have killed him! You know it, and you wish to conceal it from me. Oh! it would be more cruel to keep me in this suspense. Oh! tell me, and help me to support even this trial."

And, prevented by her tears from saying more, she grasped and kissed the hands of the old man, who, deeply moved, hastened to re-assure her, affirming, upon his honor, that he knew nothing of Lamberto, and encouraging her to hope for the best.

Laudomia knew too well the value of Niccolò's word, to retain a shadow of doubt, and with a quieted mind, she clasped her hands, and, raising her tearful eyes to heaven, she thanked God for this slight consolation, and prayed Him to grant to her the life and safety of her lover.

Just then, a little noise was heard at the hall door, and, in a few moments, Fra Zaccaria appeared, with other monks, and some of the citizens, among whom were two or three of the Priori. They entered silently, hardly making any salutation,

and seated themselves one after another in a circle around Niccolò, whom they wished to consult upon the present state of affairs, — they had come to hear his views, and decide upon the plans to be proposed in the Palagio, but words failed each one: in every heart was written, the grievous sentence, “For us, there is no remedy,” and still no one was willing to acknowledge to himself, or to the others, the irrevocability of the sentence; they wished to speak of hope, but they strove in vain, and the silence continued.

At this moment, a knock was heard at the door, and Landomia started, for at every sound, every tone, she felt it might be Lamberto, and she was in that state of nervous agitation, when every little noise makes one start, and quickens the pulsations of the heart. The poor girl listened, trembling all over: she heard the door open. Who can express her feelings when she heard Mona Fede exclaim:

“Oh! blessed be God, a thousand times over. You are indeed alive, Lamberto!”

Landomia attempted to rise and run to the door, but her knees failed her, she fell back into her seat, feeling that subtle chill in her throat and on her forehead, which precedes fainting. Niccolò and the others rose hastily and joyfully, and just then Lamberto entered, leaning on Fanfulla’s arm, and hastening as well as he could for he appeared to have a wounded foot; to Landomia, who raised her languid eyes to his face, he said, pressing her hand between his:

“My Landomia, you see that I am indeed returned.” And the impassioned tones of the young man said more than his words.

In a moment, Niccolò and the others closed around him, embracing him and rejoicing over him, and thanking God for his safety, and the caresses they bestowed upon Fanfulla, were little less warm, who, full of joy, said to Landomia:

“Did I not tell you I would bring him back to you, at any rate?”

“And you may say that with truth,” exclaimed Lamberto, “for if it had not been for you — That I am here, after God, I owe it to you, brother!”

“What had I to do about it?” answered Fanfulla. “It is the fortune of war, — help me as I help you, — to-day you, to-morrow me, — it is well that we are both here, still good for something, — and you see, Madonna Landomia, — don’t be frightened because Lamberto drags that leg, — it is nothing; we will tell you directly how that happened.”

The congratulations in the meantime continued, and Niccolò,

repeatedly embracing Lamberto and the good Fanfulla, and thanking the latter for what he had done, which he had divined from the words of his companion, said to Lamberto: "Among so many calamities at least you remain to us! Oh! Lamberto, in what a terrible moment, has it been your lot to meet us again!"

The appearance of the two soldiers, showed how recently they had taken part in a severe and sharply contested battle.

The gold striped armor of Lamberto, once bright and glittering, was dimmed with rust, and covered with dust. Of the plumes which adorned his helmet, not one was left, scarce anything remained of them, but two or three stems broken and spoiled. The wristlet of the left arm was broken, and only temporarily tied together by a cord; on the front and side-armor, were seen the imprints of a hundred blows, and, on the right side, a deep bruise, caused by a ball.

Fanfulla also was much battered. He had no helmet upon his head, but a cap instead, from which hung the ends of a bandage, that was bound around his temples, and the few gray hairs, that were exposed, were matted with clotted blood. His left hand was bound up, and his armor was so broken and damaged, that it creaked, when he moved, like a broken reed.

Madonna Fede, afflicted at seeing them in such dismal plight, but at the same time, delighted to see them come out alive from so many perils, busied herself in preparing refreshment, and producing something in the way of clothing. She assisted them to lay aside their heavy armor, aided by Maurice, who had returned in no better trim than his master.

But to the momentary, though intense joy produced by the return of the two men-at-arms, succeeded very soon in the hearts of those present, the grievous and ruling thought of the rout of the Commissary Ferruccio. Their countenances gradually became overshadowed again; and they returned to their former silence, only occasionally, while Lamberto and Fanfulla were disarming themselves, dropping some broken words expressive of grief, astonishment and admiration at the action at Gavinana, and they were no sooner disarmed, than Niccolò, with a sigh, in which grief seemed tempered by a manly firmness, said:

"Now, since thus it pleases God, at least, tell us the whole."

Lamberto, then, striking the palms of his hands together, and raising them thus clasped, exclaimed with face flushed with ardor:

"Ah! never before was there such a hero as Ferruccio, and there never will be again in this world! Our wretched age was not worthy of such a man,—and to think that so much virtue should be ended by the hands of that dastardly traitor of a Maramaldo! And not to have the means of preventing it, or of wreaking vengeance! Ah! but God will know how to take vengeance! Men will avenge his wrong, while the world endures, while virtue, honor and love of country, shall take precedence of cowardice and treachery!" He pronounced these words with great vehemence, then, suddenly changing his tone and countenance, he continued with a bitter smile:

"As if *he* had need of my praises!" Then, stopping a few moments, as if to collect his thoughts he said in a low and sorrowful voice:

"This is the way it happened. You may have known, that Ferruccio fell ill just as he received orders from the Palagio, to put his troops in motion towards Florence. We lost thirteen days, for it took him that time to recover. And that, indeed, was our ruin! Enough! As it pleased God, we issued one night from the gate of Lucca. There were twenty-five standards, about three thousand infantry, to say nothing of five hundred cavalry. But men—you can testify, Fanfulla—men, who proved at Gavinana what sort of men they were—but under Ferruccio, who could help being a soldier! I need say nothing of munitions—everything had been provided—Powder, labbers, tools, provisions—there were hand-grenades, muskets so heavy as to require a rest, and a thousand things. The army took its way towards Pescia, and such order on the road! Such discipline! They seemed like a procession of monks—they were equal to the Bande Nere—Fanfulla, we have seen it. Do not you think the Bande Nere might have envied these soldiers?"

Fanfulla answered with a movement of the mouth, expressing the strongest affirmation.

"They took their way then towards Pescia, and, as the people there refused them a pass, they turned to the castle of Medicina, where they encamped. The next day, they went on to Calamocsa. On the morning of St. Stephen's day, which was the last day of this great man, he ascended the hill, and was about to go to Montale. But when they arrived at the Lari, those two rascal Cancellieri, Captain Pazzaglia and Melocchi—he, whom they call the *braretto*, managed to get round him, for our sins, for they thought nothing of the service of the city, but only to make use of us to put down the Panciatichi, and they said so much to him, that, instead of going straight on to

he said to Arsoli, 'We shall be at last.' And it must be promised him the aid of a man he never saw.

"In short, in a couple of days. The inhabitants, seeing themselves busily occupied, some in repairing and closing and fortifying their houses, others in loading themselves to the *campanile* of the town, on the side towards the mountains, women, children and old people, some covering themselves from the fury of the sun upon their heads, others, loading their carts with household furniture they could carry, driving before them an ass and a cow, or other beasts, were seen to go out of the town, uncertain whither to go, to hear the voices and the cries of the soldiers, coming a little behind these two, laughing together, and with a sad heart, feasting upon this sad spectacle. I saw one saying, 'Quick, quick, do not let them kill you, I know not what saint will protect you. I will cut off your heads with my sword, for I shall not stay here with so many Germans and Spaniards and a

"Well, we were no sooner within the city than the conflict ensued. The Cancellieri broke into house after house, killed every one they could, fired from the windows, and the struggle went on everywhere, in the streets, in the interior of the houses, where the unfortunate inmates, despairing of all pity, wished at least to die avenged, and those two diabolical wretches, (Captain Pazzaglia and il Melocchi) seemed to have become a hundred; you could not turn your eye in any direction without seeing them, and they did such things that I know not why the earth did not open and swallow them. I saw with these eyes, Melocchi, who had found in the house of a particular enemy of his, an infant of a few months old, come out into the public place — he had it by one leg, and, laughing at the joke, he swung it round twice, and then flung it into a burning house. I still hear the shrill cry of that innocent! Oh! God, and couldst Thou give victory to such assassins? Unable to prevent, and unwilling to witness, such deeds of wickedness, I left the place, and Fanfulla with me, and we went to the gate towards Gavinani, to wait till those horrors should be ended. All at once whom should we see but Melocchi, who, running with two others, cried out to me, 'Come, come! quick, quick! let's overtake those fugitives, before they escape us!' We two rushed upon him like two mastiffs, 'Take yourself off, vile knave!' said I, and if he had replied, he had been a dead man. So he made good his retreat, and these poor wretches escaped.

"Their fury came to an end at last, for the alarm bells of Gavinana were heard to ring furiously, and Ferruccio, supposing it might be the enemy, began to put his troops in order. He was with the other captains in the house of Mezzalancia, without the gate of Pistoja, and that field* on the acclivity, which rises on the opposite side of the road, was so crammed with soldiers, that you could see nothing but weapons.

"The sky was dark, and it rained in torrents: orders were given for the soldiers to rest and refresh themselves, and the Commissary, coming out bare headed, but otherwise in complete armor, spoke to the soldiers as only *he* could speak: he drank, and then said, laughingly, 'The weather is in our favor, for our wine will be so well watered, that we shall not go drunk to battle.' And this was his last draught.

"That white Turkish horse of his, stood ready saddled and bridled by his side; he mounted him, and, waving his naked sword, put himself in motion at the head of fourteen standards,

* This field is still called *il campo di ferro*.

forming the vanguard. The rear-guard consisted of fifteen standards, headed by Signor Gian Paolo. I was with this last, under the command of Amico d'Arsoli, and Fanfulla went with Ferruccio.

"In the meantime, news came that the Imperialists were much more numerous than we, and that they were commanded by the Prince in person. Fanfulla says, that Ferruccio, on hearing this, could not help exclaiming, 'Ah! traitor Malatesta!' for it was not to be supposed that Orange would have left his camp, thus undefended, under the walls of Florence, had he not been assured by Malatesta, that it would not be molested. Perhaps in his heart, Ferruccio doubted then of the result of the encounter, but, externally manifesting great boldness of spirit, he hastened on to Gavinana.

"We others, with the cavalry of the rear-guard, took a turn a little below, on the right of the town, in order to attack the troops of the Prince, and, riding as rapidly and compactly as possible, (for the roads were such as to render the manœuvring of a troop of horse very difficult), we heard within the town the discharge of arquebuses, and the uproar of the affray which had already commenced. We hastened forward to join the combatants, and, crossing the little stream there, came out into an open space between the chestnut-trees, and there we encountered the cavalry of Bicherini, with Herrera and Rosciale, and the Albanese with their Greek soldiers, and we had not fought half an hour, when, aided by the arquebusiers, who were with us, we began to repulse them, and they were evidently losing ground.

"For myself, I do not wish to boast, but I did what I could, and the Signor Amico, poor old man, fought that day as though he had been but twenty-five. Thus, still pressing upon the enemy, we passed round the walls, and at length reached the other part of the town, a place called Vecchieto, where the Imperialists began to disperse in all directions. The Prince, seeing the dastardly conduct of his men, pushed forward into those fields called the Vergini. From this side of the town and from that, from every direction, there rained into this place a shower of musketry, but he, bold Signor as he was, nothing heeded it, but pushed on; and just as he was rushing upon Masi, with sword on high, I saw him reel, and then fall extended upon the earth. At first, few of his people were aware of this, for the smoke obscured everything, but all at once, his horse, a beautiful bay, covered with white foam, came down with a leap, snorting like a lion, and, passing like a ray of light, disappeared into the thicket of chestnut-trees, breaking and crushing branches, and everything else that came in his path.

"These poltroons acted as if they had seen the devil; and, instead of rushing on to vengeance, away they scampered as if they would break their necks, and our soldiers after them, shouting 'Victory!' as loud as they could yell, for Ferruccio heard the cry from within the walls, and believed he had gained the battle.

"Arsoli then, much excited, the joy of victory flashing from his eyes, said to me and another soldier, 'Quick, go round to the Porta Papiniana, and if the Commissary can give me fifty horsemen, bring them hither to repel those who are about to surround the walls and attack our people in the rear, while I follow these fugitives.'

"He gave the spur to his horse, and was off, and we after him, like arrows. I well knew how important it was for us to make all speed, for I saw appearing in the distance, entire companies of infantry, prepared for the assault. While we were galloping over these hills, all at once the earth seemed to give way beneath me, and I and my horse fell, rolling down the declivity into a thicket of brambles, until we stopped in a hollow, I beneath, the horse lying motionless upon my right leg, which suddenly felt moist and warm, from the blood of the animal, who had been pierced by a ball, and died, as I believe, instantly. I could neither move nor assist myself, and my breath seemed to leave me, which surprised me, as only my leg lay under the horse; but, on thinking of the matter since, I have supposed that just at the moment when I fell, a cannon-ball must have passed very near my face, and you know that is sufficient to take away the breath for a moment.

"I thrust my hands here and there, and tried to release my leg, but all in vain, and I had nothing for it, but to be patient. In the meantime, my comrade had reached the Commissary, and Fanfulla was commissioned to conduct the fifty horsemen to the place indicated by Arsoli. I saw them come and form themselves in battle array, in an open space but a few steps from where I had fallen, but they could not see me, for I was in the midst of the bushes, and I could not cry out. I watched them, however, and I then saw how little account our Fanfulla makes of a musket-shot. He was mounted in front of his file, and several young men stooping to avoid the musket-balls that whistled by them, I could hear him say, 'Courage, boys, that is nothing: those that whistle have already passed,' and, erect in his saddle, one would have thought him on the parade-ground drilling the soldiers, rather than in the heat of battle: thus he went on, giving them many instructions, and just then a shot glanced his horse's shoulder, causing him to spring aside, and

Fanfulla, with all seriousness, and without evincing the least discomposure, said, as he made his horse move on, 'When one sees that his horse is stricken, the rule is, not to allow him to stand still, for he feels the pain more, and if a tendon is wounded, it will become rigid; keep him in motion, gently, thus touching him a bit with your spurs.' "

At these words, Fanfulla said, laughing, "Why, what would you have? I saw that the whistling of balls round the ears of those striplings, seemed to put them in a panic, and I wished them to understand, that *that* was a thing of no consequence. I've heard a plenty of them, and still I am here."

Niccolò and the others smiled a little, and Lamberto continued:

"In short, I could not by any means release my leg, which now pained me extremely, so much so, that I thought it must be broken; and just as I had recovered breath enough to call for aid, a cross-bow-man came running to recall Fanfulla and his men to the aid of the Commissary, for these foot-soldiers, seen by us a few minutes before, instead of going below, had crowded into the Porta Peciana, and were renewing the contest within the town with Ferruccio's soldiers, already weary with the long conflict with Maramaldi's men, whom they had defeated. I saw Fanfulla depart, and I was forced to remain without power to extricate myself. In a short time, I heard a tremendous noise in the town, with such a continual discharge of guns, that it seemed like the incessant roar of thunder, and I was in utter despair at being unable to do anything.

"After an hour's time, the firing became less and less, until it ceased entirely, and only a hollow, buzzing sound came from the town, like that proceeding from a nest of hornets; at evening, Fanfulla came to my relief, he can tell you what passed within the town, for he saw the whole."

"Would that I had not seen it!" said Fanfulla. "When we were called back — ah! you know very well I cannot talk like Lamberto, but I will tell my story as well as I can — well, then, when we arrived at the Porta Papiniana, I made every one dismount, for, in these narrow, crooked streets, 'two legs are better than four,' says I. Well, on foot then, with pikes shouldered, and ranks well closed, we entered the square. What did we see there? Corpses in heaps, blood running in rivulets in every direction, like the waters of the tempest. The first company of the infantry had already penetrated the road from the Porta Peciana, and the whole main street, which ascends a little, was wedged with pikes, and the enemy were advancing upon us with all fury. The Commissary, already wounded and

trampled under foot, what could he do? The men were mostly dead or wounded. Did they suppose we would yield? Yes, that they did, the green pumpkins. Ferruccio called around him the captains and corporals, and, forming into line, with heads down, we charged into that battalion of infantry. And he was the foremost to fling himself upon them, you see, and when captain Goro attempted to pass before him, to protect his person, he seized him by the arm, roaring like a lion, and dragged him back. Ah! I have had many knocks, and I have known misfortune more than once, but such luck as that which gave our squadron for we were still united with the others into the hands of that file of infantry, by Our Lady, I never saw but once.

“ Rushing upon them, with clenched teeth, for it was almost dark, our men worked with knives and daggers, sometimes grappling and wrestling with the enemy, then thrown to the earth, would rise again, and the more of them we killed, the more there seemed to be, and I no more expected to come out alive, than I expected to be made Pope. Soon we had hardly strength left to stand upon our feet, much less to fight; and there was such a heat, — our armor seemed to be fire itself. Then Orsino, who kept at the side of Ferruccio, and who saw him panting, covered with powder and sweat, the blood dripping from his numerous wounds, said to him, ‘ Shall we not be obliged to surrender, Signor Commissary?’ ‘ No!’ he cried, with a stifled howl, his strength seeming to return to him all at once, and he rushed, more madly than ever, into the thickest of the infantry, who now began to waver. You may imagine what effect that had upon us; we fought like mastiffs, we thrust, we pushed, we forced our way over fallen corpses, and, all dripping with blood, succeeded in reaching the gate, and, finding myself at the entrance, I supposed we had routed the infantry, for, to tell the truth, I could no longer see the narrow street, I felt a stunning sensation, for I had been wounded in the head, and the blood, pouring down my face, obscured my sight. However, as we were out where there was more space, I wiped the blood from my eyes, and the enemy’s ranks opening somewhat, I saw the Commissary rush into a little house, near the Chapel of the Virgin, and I after him, saying, ‘ I will hold out as long as you do.’ And from that spot, the blows began to resound again; ten of us remained, and no more; and now one fell, and now another, without recoiling one step, we fought on the threshold, at length there were more than a hundred attacking us, they came full before them, and rushed in upon us, for we were now reduced to four; then

“Maramaldo, conqueror of
house, on the corner of the c
before the door, which is asc
as the soldiers were carryin
they flung him down at Ma
force, but, however, he raise
tained a front more lofty and

Here, Fanfulla was silent
and afflicted air, quite foreig
his head, “I would give wh
have seen what I am about
pause, he resumed :

“Maramaldo approached
last, poltroon *merchant*.”

“But Ferruccio, disarmed,
was, defied him to his face, ar
was thus upbraiding the trait
handle of his dagger ; he unal
ruccio’s face, I saw it with m
ruccio moved not, he turned n
to God. Twice the blade w
dying, and the blood spouting
‘Vile poltroon, you murder a

“My hands had been bou
ven, I would have avenged hi
such men called captains of
rather. They are a di-

"In short, for old acquaintance sake, (for all the soldiers who have been in the wars of Italy for the last twenty years, are acquainted with each other,) and, not through any merit of my own, but they all liked me, he let me go, but I promised him, that if I could get together a little money, I would give him something. I am afraid, however, he will have to wait some time.

"Then I thought of Lamberto; God knows, thought I, what has become of him. It was already night, and the soldiers were feasting, eating and drinking, sacking the houses, in short, doing as soldiers always do. I went out silently, determined to find Lamberto, alive or dead; and I thought of you, Madonna Laudomia. How can I return to her without him, I said. I began my search among the hills, (it was a starry night, which were strewn with dead and dying, some moaning, some blaspheming God and the saints, some, seeing me pass, commended themselves to my compassion, but what could I do? I answered, 'Commend yourself to God, brother,' and passed on, for a month would not have been long enough to attend to all of them.

"In fine, after a couple of hours, which seemed to me much longer, for the wound in my head pained me so, and I felt so weary and bruised, that, had I fallen, I should not have been able to get up again, at last, I say, I found him in that hollow, and, God be thanked, alive. 'Let us help each other, Lamberto,' said I, 'for the holiday is over, and it has been a fine one,' and I told him the whole. How we succeeded in raising, together, the dead horse, and finding means of returning hither, is of little importance; the fact is, we are here, for I was willing to risk my neck for the sake of seeing Florence once more."

THE night which follows
Florentines, full of inquisitive
the expectation of grave events
tomorrow.

In those hours, even, when
sleep usually triumphs over
every trouble, Florence resounds
met in passing through the streets
from the windows, the noises
within the houses, showed
people felt that they were
long and bloody tragedy, and
more fiercely than ever, passions
and desires, now on the point of
being blasted.

The lower class, that is,
those who, in such cases, are
loyalty, without manœuvring
this very reason, often pay dearly
of the hypocritical and crafty
night, to come boldly on the scene
hoping for victory, but resigning
the sacrifice of many lives.

A most beautiful and august
could one have penetrated through
the *popolani*, and seen the preparations
To see these preparations

give their lives for her, as the lover would lay down his life for his beloved, without seeking other reward than the sole joy of dying to save her.

How many and how fervent must have been, in those nights, the prayers of the mother and the wife. How many tears shed in secret. How many vows, how many promises to God from innocent souls, whose every hope had fled, save that in Him. Fancy loses herself, in imagining the infinite variety of states of mind inclosed within the bounds of so many families; the stern counsels of the old, the daring and confident hopes of the young, the honorable and unshaken purpose of all. But the heart recoils, to think, that in these same hours, there were in Florence, citizens who were keeping watch, only to contrive means to save themselves from the common wreck, to ransom their lives with the price of treachery, their riches with the price of the blood or the liberty of their brethren.

These were but too numerous. They were the aristocratic party upon whom Malatesta reckoned, and the care of gaining over whom, had been intrusted to Troilo and Nobili.

This cost them little trouble, for events were now ripe for consummation, and private interest could effect more than any other consideration in men, who had nevertheless shown themselves, at first, prompt and zealous for the common good. But they were rich, they had something to lose; Niccolò mistrusted them, and not without reason.

Troilo and Nobili, upon leaving Malatesta, went the rounds, and encountering here and there, one after another of the upper class, they succeeded, with speeches and promises, in detaching them from the popular cause, and inducing them to adopt those extreme measures which they afterwards carried into execution, and which were the cause of the ultimate ruin of the whole city.

The night passed thus, and the dawn, desired or feared, but certainly watched by many, appeared clear and limpid, behind the hills of the Incontro and of Vallambrosa. When its rays began to penetrate the houses, and became visible in spite of the red glare of lights, in almost every family, a last parting took place: then succeeded the embraces, the weepings, the warm and rapid colloquies of husbands and wives, and the benedictions of the old men and fathers, and then a murmur gradually spread through the city, a hollow sound of voices, of footsteps, of doors opening and shutting in haste, while the citizens, issuing from their houses to join their several standards, exchanged the last adieus, the last glances with their kinsmen, wives and children, whom they left weeping on their thresholds.

Already, by sunrise, the square was not less crowded by people than it had been on the preceding day, and the Signori were assembled in council, when a company of horse, headed by Cencio Guercio, was seen to come in the direction of Varchereccia and proceed towards the palace. Arrived at the principal entrance, amidst the excited tumult and the not too friendly murmurs of the crowd, he dismounted, and going into the hall where the council were assembled, he delivered, in arrogant phrase, the message sent by him from Malatesta.

The traitor had lost no time, even during the past night; for, knowing that the general repugnance to making terms with the enemy, and the desire to try the result of a combat, had become greater than ever, he had sent into the camp of Don Ferrante, the above mentioned Cencio, with one other person, who returned with a document containing terms of capitulation, by which the Medici were to be restored indeed, but the city to remain free.

With this document, then, Cencio came to the Signori, saying, that Malatesta advised them to accept the terms, and warning them, as their affairs were wholly ruined, not, by a refusal, to bring upon their heads the destruction of Florence, multiplying words of so much insolence, that the Gonfaloniere was strongly disposed to arrest him. Too late the Signori perceived their error, in committing themselves to the faith of such a knave, who now so impudently laid bare his treachery; and the disturbance in the street increasing, and the cry for battle becoming more importunate, Cencio was dismissed with similar and even loftier words than he had used himself, and deputed to say to Malatesta (we copy Varchi) that the Assembly had deliberated this often proposed and frequently discussed question for the last time, and that they had decided to fight, and that, therefore, they, as Signori, *commanded* him, and, as citizens, *entreated* him, for his own honor and their salvation, to give orders to draw out his troops, for that, on their part, they were prepared and had in readiness, everything which he had demanded of them, and something more.

Malatesta, in the meantime, full of anxiety and doubt, now menacing the Florentines, now making promises to his men, and encouraging them to stand firm, went on multiplying around him the guard of Perugian and Corsican soldiers, who were devoted to his interests.

When Cencio repeated to him the words of the Signori, knowing that there remained to him no other remedy, he resolved to do as he had designed,—ask his dismissal, *resigning* the rank of Captain-General rather than obey a command by which he should lose the first of all his intrigues, not that

he believed his resignation would be accepted ; on the contrary, he hoped to conquer the constancy of the Florentines, and constrain them, finding themselves without a captain, to submit to the terms of capitulation.

He then wrote a long letter to the Signori, filled with obscure and unintelligible reasonings, for there was nothing clear or distinct in them, — endeavoring to prove that he had honorably, and in all faith, discharged the office of Captain, and taken every means to deliver the city from this siege ; the facts having demonstrated that his counsel not to go out to battle had been good, and that he still held to that more than ever, now that so many losses had diminished the force of the citizens, already so inferior to that of the enemy ; that he could not find it in his heart to concur in what would prove the ruin of this noble city ; and that since the Signori, following the opposite opinion, had decided to carry it into effect, he preferred to demand his discharge, resign his office and depart.

Stefano Colonna, to whom Malatesta humbly commended himself on this occasion, requesting him to aid and not oppose him, was disposed to favor him, either from a fear of committing himself with the king of France, whose soldier he was, or from some other reason, but the fact stands recorded, that he affixed his signature to this protest, and it was immediately sent to the Palagio.

The indignation and contempt awakened among the Signori on reading it, and on seeing now so openly revealed, the infamous soul of this traitor, it is impossible to describe, and, boiling with wrath, they put the subject to vote, and it was decided to accept Malatesta's resignation ; a reply was soon written, in which, without descending to recriminations and complaints, which would have ill comported with the dignity of the republic, they granted his request, and in terms more honorable than he merited.

To Andrea Niccolini and Francesco Zati, both Commissaries, was deputed the task of conveying this letter to Malatesta, taking with them Paolo da Calignano, notary, as a public witness.

The populace, who were, impatiently awaiting the result of these deliberations, saw two young mules led up to the palace entrance, by the beards of the Signori, and, in a few moments, the above-named Commissaries appeared, and, mounting the animals, set off, the two beards preceding them, amid the whistlings of the crowd, among whom ran a rumor of the singular and important commission with which they were entrusted.

Arrived at the Via Maggio, they encountered the first guards of Malatesta, who spread their ranks to let them pass, but with insulting words and malicious glances, indicated what reception they were to meet with from their Captain. Dismounting at length in the court, they ascended the stairs and found him in the hall where he usually gave audience, seated in a large elbow-chair, surrounded by his body-guard, his countenance which expressed anger and disdain, showed no change on the arrival of the Commissaries, as he scarcely with a slight motion of the head acknowledged their salutation.

If these men felt no fear on finding themselves in the hands of such numbers, who, at this point might well be called enemies, seeing the hostile visages of these knaves, and knowing the nature of the message they brought, it must be acknowledged they were brave souls.

They disposed themselves boldly to discharge their commission, and Niccolini, taking out the paper, began to read it aloud.

But he had hardly pronounced the first words, when Malatesta, rising in a rage, rushed upon him, and unsheathing his dagger, stabbed him in several places, and would have killed him, if his guard, considering the enormity of the case, and fearing the consequences, had not disarmed him, or if the weakness of his arm had not rendered the blows ill-aimed and slight.

Zati, seeing his companion at this extremity, lost his courage for a moment, and implored his life of Malatesta, who, blinded with rage, had rushed upon him also, and was with difficulty prevented from killing him.

In this tumult, the greatest uproar spread through the house, court and street, and the soldiers who, at this time, and on every occasion, thought of nothing but booty, seized the silver maces of the beadles, the mules, and even the cloak of the wounded Commissary, who was taken thence by Alamanno de' Pazzi, and kindly cared for and provided with medical aid. In the meantime, Malatesta, whom fury, rage, and the fear of being forced in a moment to renounce so many hopes, had maddened to frenzy, went about chafing, and fuming and crying, "Florence shall not be a stall for mules; it shall be saved, in spite of traitors!"

The disorder and uproar still continued very great, and it was now manifest to all, that things had come to a pass, when force alone must decide who should remain masters of Florence, the Palagio or Malatesta, and the wits of the latter were not so much obscured by rage, as to prevent him from comprehending, that it was not a time for words and bravado, but for prompt and efficient action.

In the meantime, Zati, the notary, and the plundered beadles, with their clothes and persons in much disorder, had returned to the square, and were seen by the astonished people to pass on and enter the Palagio, and the affair was no sooner known, than a roar of rage and a cry for vengeance arose, so loud that the hills and valleys of the Arno re-echoed with it, and the enraged Gonfaloniere, swearing to avenge at all risks the insulted republic, cried to his sergeants to bring his arms and make ready his horse, for he would go against Malatesta himself, and see, as he said, if one traitor could stand against all Florence. The order was executed in a flash, the arms were brought, and a war-horse with rich caparison, covered with Florentine lilies, was brought to the door, and the populace, seeing these preparations, put themselves in order of march, in equal haste, and the mass of human beings was seen to heave, to separate, to close in, each one hastening to take his place under his own banner, preparing arms, lighting one after another the cords of the arquebuses, and, in the midst of these warlike preparations, a hollow roar of voices was heard, like the subterranean murmur which is the forerunner of the earthquake. To add to all this din, came the reverberations of the huge bell, which, in similar circumstances, had tolled the last hour of traitors; the deep, sonorous oscillations of its brazen walls, raining down from aloft upon this multitude, vibrated in every heart, kindling there new sparks of zeal, as the sound of the trumpet stimulates the horse in battle, for that sound, at such a moment, in an hour of such extreme peril, seemed to them like the voice of their country, calling to her children and imploring their aid.

Among the gonfalons of the different quarters, which, ranged around the square at wide distances, were floating in the breeze, was seen that of the Golden Lion of S. Giovanni, and among the foremost, were Niccolò and his sons. The courageous old man, deaf to a thousand prayers, to the tears of his daughters, and the counsels of his friends, was resolved this day to be found with the others, where the final fate of Florence was to be decided. If not with his arm, he thought, and he was right, he might be of use by his example; for what foot could flee, what heart vacillate in the self-possessed and venerable presence of such a man?

Having laid aside the *lucco*, he was arrayed in a glittering coat of mail, with a sword at his side and a pike in his hand. Instead of the capuche, he wore a cap of steel, from beneath which, descended his reverend white locks, covering his neck, while upon his breast fell the equally white and bushy beard.

His bust, unbent by years, was ample and erect, and his

limbs, though somewhat attenuated by age, were still lusty and vigorous, and still sustained him firmly; his eye flashed with the fire of youth, and an unusual glow tinged his cheeks.

Notwithstanding the tumult, and the diverse thoughts which agitated all minds, many eyes were directed towards him, and the people pointed him out to one another, with words of affection, wonder and veneration, while he, unmoved, turned upon those around him, a serene, lofty glance, in which might be read the unchangeable purpose, as the fleeting shadow of the banner which waved about his head, now covered him, extinguishing the flash of his armor, and now whirling afar, left him glittering anew in the sun's rays.

At length, the Gonfaloniere appeared on the platform of the Palagio, covered with arms; he mounted his charger, and put himself in motion, preceded by the great standard of the people, who, in fine order, quarter by quarter, put themselves in file to follow him. The trumpets of the Signori sounded, the bells of the Palagio, and of many of the churches began to ring, while the cry was reiterated, "Long live the Marzocco! Long live the Palagio! Death to the traitors! Death to Malatesta!" and the ground seemed to tremble under the weight of so many steps, the walls shook with the vibrations of so many voices, the clash of arms, and the heavy roll of the artillery-wagons, brought from Vacchereccia, to storm, if necessary, the walls and gates of Malatesta's palace.

But Malatesta, foreseeing the ruin impending over him, now had recourse to the last and most dastardly defence which yet remained to him, and which, at the same time, was the most terrible and certain, which could be imagined, against which the people of Florence had no remedy. The traitor had caused Piero Stipicciano da Castel di Piero to enter the bastions with his men, and had sent to the Porta S. Pier Gattolini, Margutte da Perugia, who, attacking it with great fury, drove away the Captain Altoviti, who was on guard there, and, at the same time, turned in the direction of the city, the cannons placed on the great tower of the same gate.

The Imperial camp, informed by Malatesta of what had happened, had, in the meantime, risen to arms, and were prepared, at his signal, to descend and enter the city, and the ferocious German and Spanish bands brandished their pikes, and sent forth cries of joy, believing the time had arrived for the sacking of Florence; for the booty, the murders, the rapine, the outrages, which were, in fine, the goal of their long delayed hopes.

Malatesta, thus backed by the whole of the Imperial army.

could, so far as *he* was concerned, laugh at the fury of the populace, but one weighty consideration prevented him from pushing matters to extremity, and led him to use all his efforts to induce the people to retire, without calling aid from without, aid, of which he actually stood in fear. This was the fear, or rather the certainty, that the bands from the camp, entering tumultuously into Florence, beginning the combat within the city, would pillage it, contrary to the express orders of the Pope, who wished it to come into his possession entire, and unspoiled of its immense riches.

Malatesta, therefore, sent some of his men to meet the assembled people, whom they found on the Ponte Vecchio, and to whom they said, that if they advanced a step farther, the whole Imperial army would be put within the walls; and several citizens, who had been eye-witnesses to the occupation of the Porta S. Pier Gattolini, confirmed the truth of the fact, and stated that it was now in Malatesta's power to carry his means into effect, and these people, forcing their way at the same time among the Signori and the first ranks of the people who followed, taking the hands now of one, now of another, exhorting, praying, weeping, counselled the crowd to retire, and not tempt God and fortune in an enterprise now desperate, and which could result in nothing but ruin and loss of life. But in these excited breasts, rage could not so soon give place to reason, and the message of Malatesta, rousing the general indignation more than ever, increased the thirst for vengeance, and the disposition to press forward to the assault, was strengthened rather than repressed, but such and so forcible were the statements of these citizens, who had introduced themselves into the throng, and the evidence, that now, no force in the world could save this unhappy people, was so strong, that, at last, the Gonfaloniere and the Signori, disheartened and despairing of all aid, cursing fate, the cruelty of the Pope, and the traitors who had been his instruments, at length gave the command for the people to retreat and disband themselves.

The halt made by the front ranks, produced in the whole mass a regurgitation, so to say, in a direction opposite to that which it had, at first, followed, and an undulatory motion, like that which takes place among the rings of which the body of the caterpillar is composed, was seen to spread on all sides, and, at the same time, from mouth to mouth ran the rumor of some encountered obstacle, which, at first, was repeated without variation or comment, but which, in its progress, underwent strange transformations, and, at last, in a whisper, full of terror, it came to be affirmed by all, that the enemy had entered Florence from

the opposite side, and that all the Oltrarno had come into the possession of the Imperialists, who had commenced their work of sacking and pillage.

From extreme boldness, the multitude pass easily to extreme despondency, and the more so, when they see themselves threatened by an obscure peril, against which, they know no defence, and which fancy makes even greater than reality.

To the care of the common good, succeeds then that of individual concerns, and to the minds of those citizens who despaired henceforth of saving their country, came vividly the thoughts of wives, children, family. Every one remembered his dear ones, left unarmed within the domestic walls, each one already figuring them in his imagination, slain by the Germans or Spaniards of the camp; to run to their defence was the thought that took possession of every breast, and which, in a few moments, dispersed this crowded assemblage.

The citizens ran here and there through the streets, squares and lanes; it seeming a thousand years before they saw again the doors of their houses, tremblingly expecting to find them broken open, and the imperial soldiers already in possession. With downcast heads, panting breasts and tearful eyes, each, according to his nature, either turned to God, and with broken prayers implored His aid, or swore tremendous oaths, directed against the Pope, or against Fra Girolamo, calling him an impostor, and cursing him for having deceived him.

By degrees, the general consternation pervaded the houses and the families, and everywhere arose a weeping, a lament of women and children, and finding themselves left alone in their houses, and their husbands not returning, they began to forebode still greater dangers, and thinking their husbands might be already dead, and hearing, at the same time, the cries and lamentations of their neighbors, were almost distracted with terror. Hastily taking their infants in their arms, dragging after them the older ones, who, affrighted, grasped at their gowns, they went out of their houses, and rushing through the streets, sought the shelter of a church, and depositing their babes on the steps of the altar, and standing with arms crossed, expecting every moment to feel the hands of the soldiers in their hair, they cried to God for mercy.

But not in all cases could entire families, much as they might desire it, succeed in obtaining the shelter of these holy places, for in many houses, as is often the case, there were sick and wounded, bed-ridden, or old people, unable to move or assist themselves, and then a new and sadder struggle arose between the desire to place in safety those who could flee, and the

guish of abandoning alone and undefended those whose transportation would require many arms and much time; and this variety of circumstances gave birth to stupendous acts of strength, charity and filial love, in which the promptitude of the spirit gave supernatural force to weak, feeble bodies, and young women were seen carrying in their arms, their aged fathers or mothers, and arriving, breathless and exhausted, depositing them on the steps of a church, where they were received by compassionate arms, and transported to the foot of the altar.

In contrast with these virtuous deeds, were others of the most wicked and heinous character: many mothers, in whom terror and care for their children, had extinguished every other feeling, left their houses open and abandoned those within, who had not strength to follow them; and it sometimes happened that, not by hostile soldiers, but by wretches, composing the dregs of the populace, were committed the robberies and murders perpetrated upon these poor forsaken ones.

Those among the citizens, who, returning to their houses, found them empty, deserted by the affrighted family, went round the neighborhood inquiring for them, and seeking them here and there in the streets, and partly reproving and partly compassionating their hasty flight, led them back whence they came, for the city was, through the care of the Signori, a little relieved from the fear of an immediate sack, a standard being planted on every bridge to defend it from those coming from Oltrarno, so that in the hearts of many, the terror by which they had been so suddenly seized, gave place to new hope, and among the people collected in the square, though neither so numerous nor so bold as before, many voices were heard demanding battle. But there were, also, not a few demanding capitulation, while some among the citizens, who loved their country and freedom more than life, ran to the *Marzocco* on the corner of the Palazzo, and embracing the rough stones which serve as its base, drenched them with tears, covered them with kisses, and swore to defend to the last that venerated emblem, to die a thousand times rather than desert it.

Where could Niccolò be, if not here, and the foremost and the most impetuous of these men? Could he yet at this extremity admit the doubt even, that Florence must fall? Could he believe Fra Girolamo an impostor, his prophecies a lie?

Standing erect at the feet of the Lion, surrounded by his sons, and a great number of citizens, he went on with serious and zealous words, communicating to every heart that faith and constancy which remained unshaken in his own, and not even

when the sun began to decline in the west, and the stars to appear, would he leave that spot, notwithstanding the entreaties of his friends, who could not bear to see him suffer such fatigue, and who also feared that new disasters might take place during the night; that the Palleschi might seize the opportunity to raise an uproar, or do other mischief; but he still obstinately refused to go home, and, drawn by his example, many citizens also passed the hours of sleep in the open square.

It is easy to imagine, what must have been the universal feeling of the people, so woeful, so full of terrible forebodings of the ills which awaited them on the morrow, especially when, after midnight, a deep silence had succeeded to so much tumult, and not a sound was heard in the streets, save the steps of the sentinels, the hootings of the owls from the top of the tower, or the clocks striking the hours of the night.

Niccolò, yielding to excessive weariness, bowed his forehead upon a bed composed of the cloaks of his sons, and fell asleep with his head resting upon the base of the *Marzocco*, while they, mute and pensive, kept watch by his side.

Two hours before day, the moon, then on the wane, rose slowly, throwing its pale, faint glimmer upon the buildings towards the east, and illumining with an alabaster light, the face of the sleeping old man.

Lamberto had gently taken off Niccolò's steel cap, and, to protect him from the damp night air, had drawn over his head a portion of one of the cloaks, and the august and placid serenity diffused over the lineaments of Niccolò, and his full, deep breathing, showed, that on the naked earth, in extreme misfortune, and in the greatest of perils, it is permitted to the strong, pure-minded man, to find sleep and repose.

It remains to be known, whether on this night, in these same hours, Charles V. and Clement VII. found equal repose in their beds of down, hung with silk and gold.

A new disturbance, prepared however, by long-woven machinations, now arose, to accelerate and render more distressing the agony of the republic.

The party of the *nobility*, resolved at length to detach themselves from the rest of the people, repaired, armed, at early dawn, to the Piazza di San Spirito, to the number of four hundred young men, of the first families of Florence, despising, in the words of Varchi, "*La religione del sagramento tante volte ed in tanti modi fatto da loro.*"

They chose this place, to be near Malatesta, and thus be able to succor him, or be succored by him; to force the Palazzo to accept the terms of capitulation, and to have these such as

preserve to them their rank and riches ; this was the end at which they aimed.

Upon learning this movement, Bernardo da Verrazzano, Commissary of the militia of that quarter, hastened to them, and with conciliating words, endeavored to bring them back to duty, showing how important it was, that in such peril, the will of the people should be maintained one and united ; that thus, they could obtain terms more reasonable and more conducive to the common good ; while, on the contrary, schisms and disunions, giving greater encouragement to the enemy, would render them less tractable and more insolent.

But his words were scattered to the winds, for, repulsed and abusively menaced, he was near being killed by Morticino degli Antinori, who, having taken aim at him with his arquebus, had already approached the lighted cord to the touchhole, and would have fired, had it not been for the interference of the bystanders. Verrazzano thus escaped.

The news of this mutiny reaching the Palagio, the Signoria, who now gave up all for lost, and who, now that so many, and so diverse perils menaced them, knew not what to do, nor how to remedy them, sent, to leave no means untried, Rosso de' Buondelmonti, Commissary of the militia of S. Maria Novella, to entreat them not to bring upon themselves the final ruin of the republic, using the same arguments already fruitlessly adduced by Verrazzano, and which were now heard with no better success for the second time, the Paleschi making answer, that henceforth they would acknowledge no other signoria, and no other signor than Malatesta.

Buondelmonti, despairing of making any impression on these men, made his way to Malatesta's presence, beseeching him on the part of the Signoria, to make use of his authority to send away these young men from San Spirito, but the reader may imagine whether this demand was complied with ; for Malatesta had already sent messages to these citizens, deceiving them with promises of an oligarchical form of government, such as they desired, offering to be prompt in aiding and sustaining them ; and, at last, he said openly to the Commissary of the Signoria, that he concurred with the men of San Spirito, and should have no dealings with any others.

This rebellion of the upper class, although by reason of its small numbers, it did not appear a matter of great importance, was, nevertheless, the blow, which, following so many others, decided at last the fall of the republic of Florence ; just as a slight stroke is at last sufficient to prostrate an old, well rooted oak, after it has felt the force of repeated blows of the axe.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

THESE aristocrats, aware, that they were now masters of Florence, demanded, in the first place, the release of those Pallescan citizens, who, from the commencement of the siege, had been shut up in the Palagio, and the Signoria, who no longer had the power to command, were forced to obey this requisition, and immediately set them at liberty, and they were soon seen issuing from the Palagio, thanking their liberators, and they, shortly after, returned thanks to Malatesta, to whom they immediately repaired to pay their respects.

Busini, who was present on this occasion, and who was one of the few surviving Piagnoni, who were more desirous to die than live, says, in a letter to Varchi, that these men, having, during their imprisonment, neglected all care of their persons, appeared with long beards, resembling the hermits of the Faltorna.

The Signoria, now, knowing no other alternative, forced by necessity and the violence of the nobles, and left abandoned to themselves, were, at last, obliged to yield. The Council of the Eighty convened in the great hall of the Palagio, in that same room, which, through Fra Girolamo's means, was arrayed for the great council; that room, where, several years after, were depicted by Vasari, the scenes of so many battles, which but rivetted the chains of Florentine slavery, convened, I say in this very room, the council, filled with struggling emotions, with that silent and profound grief, which may readily be imagined, elected four ambassadors to Don Ferrante, with authority to accept his terms, provided that the liberty of Florence should be preserved.

This single clause may appear to the reader as bitter mockery, and the progress of time will show that his judgment does not err, but it is human nature to cling with the greatest obstinacy to words, when the reality signified by them has vanished.

The ambassadors departed, and were conducted to Villa Guicciardini, called La Bugia, where Baccio Valori lodged, and coming to a parley with him and Don Ferrante, after a long

discussion, the terms of capitulation were arranged, and, as it was already night, they returned with them to Florence.

Niccolò, although abandoned by almost all, still remained in the square, in the very same spot. When it was announced to him that all was ended, every hope extinguished, and that Florence had finally come into the hands of the Palleschi, he experienced that grief which exceeds all other griefs, which is not to be compared with the loss of property, or liberty; grief arising from a loss, the most tremendous for man, that of a faith, cherished and held infallible and holy through the course of a long life. Perhaps, the only grief, which can in any way approach it, is that arising from the discovery of the treachery of the friend of our childhood.

Who can imagine, still less describe, the utter chaos of feeling in the mind of this old *popolano*, when, all at once, as if at the rending of a veil, he felt arise in his soul, the suspicion that Fra Girolamo had deceived him?

At the age of ninety years, the unhappy old man perceived that he had not yet known all the sorrows of life, and while his sons stood around him, striving to console him, noting with anxiety the sudden and fearful change in his lineaments; his eyes, formerly so serene, now bent to the ground, and his livid face, expressing such a desolate desperation, that the bystanders feared for a moment that he would fall dead, and, with such words and arguments as seemed best in the minds of each, they endeavored to revive him, while they gently strove to draw him in the direction of his home.

They succeeded in conducting him thither, passing silently through streets, shortly before, so crowded with people, so full of noise and uproar, now dark, deserted and still, except, that from time to time, moans and smothered sobs came on the air, no one knowing from whence they came.

When Niccolò saw again the dark front of his house, where he had lived free so many years, and where he must now live a slave, or quit it forever, his grief became still more bitter, he felt as one feels who revisits, for the first time, walls within which he has lived with a dear friend whom death has snatched away forever. When he crossed the threshold, passed through the entry, and entered his own room, his heart felt oppressed as if he had entered a prison. His weeping daughters came to meet him, embracing him with redoubled sobs, while he, neither repelling nor returning their mute condolence, went on divesting himself of his arms, which he threw on the ground at a distance, flinging on them a last and bitter glance; another glance was directed above, to that niche within which will

hung the Friar's garb, and where were still preserved the ashes of Fra Girolamo, and, without turning his eyes from those relics which must have awakened in him a tempest of feeling, he remained for a long time without moving, and, at length, the unhappy man, in the presence of his children, who, deeply moved, and hardly daring to breathe, drew around him, wept, wept long and bitterly.

With regard to the mistakes of prophecies and prophets, it is customary with all, to lay the fault upon anything but them; for faith, being an affection of the heart, rather than an operation of the intellect, the heart persists in maintaining and defending it against the assaults of reason, or even of evidence itself; and reasons are never wanting, when the reverse of the prediction actually takes place, to persuade one's self that it was the fault of those who did not know how to interpret it, or who did not fulfil its conditions.

Thus Niccolò, who could not in a moment abjure that faith in Fra Girolamo, which had been the guiding spirit of his whole life, — who could not in an instant detest what he adored, nor renounce in that terrible hour of trial the only consolation, the only hope that remained to him, said in his heart, while his eyes still remained fixed on the *reliques* :

“ And if our sins were such as to render us unworthy of the divine mercy, shall we, to heap up our misery, also lose our faith? Victory was promised us, but have we fought? Why retreat vilely? Why surrender ourselves? Will God aid cowards? Oh! Florence, in thy own strength hast thou trusted, and not in the strength of God! *Quare, quare, dubitasti!* ”

These thoughts were the cause of Niccolò's tears, but at the same time, they renewed and strengthened in him that faith which had indeed wavered, but which had never been overthrown: therefore, reassuming in visage and air, that grave and quiet authority which had but for a moment deserted him, he said to his sons — to Lamberto and Troilo :

“ My children, to men less strong, and of less faith than yours, the words which I am about to say to you, might appear foolishness, or the childish vagaries of an old man. But to you, who know the promises made by God through the mouth of His prophet to this city — to you who trust in them — to you, who, God be thanked, know neither cowardice nor fear, I may well say, now, when it is believed by so many that we are lost, yes, I may say it to you, we are *not* totally and irretrievably lost! No! For to him who despairs neither of God nor of *himself*, there always remains a way of salvation. Must it be said, that the whole population of Florence — that so many

thousands of citizens—have no more strength in their arms, no further means of defence? And why? Because it pleases a few cowards to despair of the public safety, and to give the state into the hands of the enemy! Because four hundred nobles—(ah! Lamberto, do you recollect? did I not tell you?) choose to trample under foot their oaths, and turn traitors, are we no longer ourselves,—are we no longer what we were yesterday? Have our arms no longer point or edge? Are our numbers diminished? Are those of the enemy increased? Yes, it is true, we are diminished by four hundred traitors, and by the same number are the Pallaschi reinforced—and is it not a shame, an infamous disgrace that that is sufficient to frighten a whole people, and induce them to throw away their arms? Let him despair who will; let him surrender who will; for I neither despair nor surrender! Ah! Ferruccio, Ferruccio, thou hast shown us how to fight, and we, in a land filled with armed men, with walls sound and uninjured!—Oh shame! eternal shame! Up, then! It is no time for words, but for deeds! The hours press, the night advances. I will make this attempt, and God will aid us. Go out, go through the city, seek out our men, our workmen among the poor *popolani*. Ah! those men are no traitors! In them, and not in the nobles, rests the strength of the city. Let us all meet in San Marco after midnight, and we will concert there what remains to be done, we will see, if there are men yet left in Florence! I will go there and wait for you, let every one enter by the gate at the back of the garden, with the password 'San Marco and Liberty!' Now go, and let us lose no time."

The brave young men received the message with delight, and departed, revived with the idea, that there was still something to be done. When they reached the door, they separated, each one going in pursuit of those with whom he was best acquainted, and on whose co-operation he could most securely reckon; and Niccolò, leaving his weeping daughters filled with forebodings of dark perils and new trials, took his way to San Marco. Troilo was out with the others, pretending to be more zealous and solicitous than any of them. But when he found himself alone, (he had accidentally taken the direction of San Trinità,) he suddenly stopped, and shaking his head, said:

"That old man has the very devil in him! And I, who believed that I was out of the business at last! And here we are again! He will not be satisfied until we are all on the ground, and if he does not find any fools to attend to him, he is capable of going alone, pike in hand, to confront the whole camp."

Thus talking to himself, he resumed his way, passed the bridge and proceeded to the lodgings of Malatesta, whom he purposed to inform of this new proceeding. The streets all around were full of soldiers and citizens of the Pallescan party, going and coming, who, by their joyous faces, their loud tones, their attitudes, gestures and noisy laughter, sufficiently attested the change which had taken place in their condition, and the state of security in which they now felt themselves to be. The court-yard, the windows of the palace shone with numerous lights, and within, there was a murmur, a stir, a hum, a moving about of many people, and it was very apparent, that with all assembled in that place, the only object was merriment and festivity.

Troilo, having found one of the house servants, sent word to Malatesta, that he had something to communicate to him of great importance. He was not required to wait long, but was speedily introduced. Malatesta was in his secret chamber, in earnest argument with Baccio Valori, who, as Troilo entered, was heard to say:

"I will not fail to write to his Holiness; but he also may think you ask too much."

These words referred to the dishonest demands made upon the Pope by Malatesta, as the price of Florentine blood. Both ceased speaking, at the entrance of the young man, who could not help observing that the faces of both these men had so changed, that they hardly appeared the same persons. The Captain was less emaciated, he stood erect with some appearance of vigor, and Baccio seemed to have lost twenty years. They received him with great demonstrations of kindness, not, however, equally sincere in both, for since the victory, the respective parts of these two knaves had somewhat changed, and their interests henceforth could little harmonize. Baccio saw the moment arrived, when he would have upon him all those who had assisted him, and to whom he had promised so much, and if he would preserve the favor of Clement VII. and not risk the loss of his own recompense, he well knew that the only way was, *that* counselled by Guido da Montforte to Boniface VIII. and expressed by Dante in the line,

"Lunga promessa coll' attender corto,"

and of the vexation and difficulty which these promises might bring upon him, he had a foretaste in the claims now put forward by Malatesta, and which were under discussion upon Troilo's arrival. It was, therefore, natural, that he should not feel particularly pleased at seeing him, just as to a man who is

contending with one inexorable creditor, the arrival of a second, is anything but agreeable. But Baccio was too crafty not to know enough to conceal these feelings under an appearance of cordiality and friendliness, while Malatesta, finding himself, so to say, in communion of interest with him, and seeing in him a sort of auxiliary, had no need to feign his satisfaction on seeing him. So, offering his hand, and pressing that of Troilo, he said to him, turning a little towards Valori, "And this young man, too, has borne himself bravely; he has feared neither fatigue nor peril — and if things have turned out according to his Holiness' wishes, he is, in a great measure, indebted to him for it. Now, tell me, Troilo, did I give you bad counsel, when I advised you to this undertaking? Are you satisfied now?"

Baccio, with a feigned and forced smile, accompanied and appeared to approve the words of Malatesta, whom, all the while, he was inwardly cursing, and who continued:

"Courage, courage! brave young man, for the preachings, the *misereres* and the processions are ended; your tribulations are henceforth ended; and it is the will of His Holiness, that his servants, — those who have aided him, shall have those rewards which they deserve; and Messer Baccio, here, understands well how to carry out the generous and magnificent intentions of His Holiness — and then — it is enough to say, that the Pope is of the House of Medici — and this house knows neither ingratitude nor meanness."

Perhaps Malatesta, to whom the character of Clement was perfectly well known, suspected something of Baccio's feelings, and talked in this strain purposely, to torment him, — and Troilo, probably with the same end, said:

"Oh! I know it, I know, — you need not tell me that. As to Messer Baccio, he has long taken an interest in me, and I am very certain that he thinks more about my affairs than I do myself. But I am not thinking of these things now; there is new mischief in the wind, and I am come to warn you of it."

And here he narrated how Niccolò, not acknowledging himself conquered, was determined to make a last trial, and that he had taken measures to collect the Piagnoni party, and hold a nocturnal meeting in the convent of San Marco, where they were to decide upon some mad and desperate scheme.

"Not that I think they can do much harm," continued Troilo, "and yet, in the present position of things, it will be well to see how many fools and madmen will be ready to lend themselves to this game; for, really it has seemed to me, that the thing ought not to be wholly unnoticed, and, therefore, I wished to inform you of it — and, so much the more, as, being obliged

to be present at this council, I might in some way be of use to you."

"You have done exceedingly well in giving us this information," answered Baccio, "for, perhaps, perhaps—from this occasion—there might be—let me think a moment—"

Malatesta, seeing Baccio, with hand on his chin and eyes fixed and thoughtful, appear to give so much weight to the news brought by Troilo, said, with an ironical laugh:

"Oh! what do you care what those fellows do? Unless the angels, as they believe, come through the air,—I should really like to see that, for the angels would have to try their strength with the Pope, and that would be a seemly discipline!"

Baccio, without heeding these remarks, went on caressing his chin, and with his lower lip thrust out, and his hand shaking, he seemed to be pondering and discussing within himself some project. At last, almost decided, he said:

"I know myself, that the Piagnoni have it still in their power to do us some harm. But, what if they might also be of use to us? What if their follies might, contrary to their intentions, aid us to obtain—to do what—I know very well what I am talking about—"

Then, checking himself abruptly, he began again to consider, and his two auditors to stare at him, expecting him to explain his new design: all three remained thus in silence a little while, and then Baccio said:

"Tell me, Signor Malatesta, the capitulations are signed, the city is ours, that I grant—but here, between you and me, for there is none to over-hear us, are we equally sure of this army? Are we sure that they will do only what we wish them to do? That these German and Spanish devils, after eleven months of siege, after so many hardships and fatigues, will, indeed, renounce the idea of pillaging Florence? Will they be satisfied with double pay, and remain quiet and do the city no harm? The Prince is dead, Gian d'Urbino is dead, and Don Ferrante, what authority has he over these *ladroni*? And if Florence is pillaged, you well know how that will suit the Pope. You, Signor Malatesta, need never expect to see Perugia again, we may as well talk plainly. I should have to go away and wear out my life, God knows where; and, as for Troilo, there is no question what would become of him."

The words of Baccio, carrying with them but too much probability, startled these two spirits, who would have done anything rather than compromise those rewards, upon which they had so securely reckoned.

"Now listen to me," continued Baccio, "the camp, so long

And the knave, delighted
heartily: then he turned
project, instructed him
self at night with the Pi
grin of his, added:

"And, if things turn
tage — only think, how
not I a good economist,

"I take off my cap to
laughing, and swearing in
heaven, in roguery I am
Baccio, still more pleas

"Another advantage we
mine answer several turns
discover the most zealous
there is no peace or truce
will wish to lose their lives
world in the skirmish, the
hangman, and the less odious
the house of Medici — for
as possible. Of Niccolò, I
like to rid myself, by a well
send him to the sheriff, for
in his favor, and, in a new
like ours, it is an ugly thing
man as Niccolò. The ques
will be able to be

have the Medici long in power ; but that may be considered afterwards. Another thing now ; if these people come to blows, how will *you* get out of the scrape, Troilo ? I should not like to have to leave you there, now that we have arrived at the gate of our wishes."

Not that Baccio was at all interested for the life of this young man, for, affairs once consummated, he might, perhaps, apply to him the calculation just mentioned, with regard to the pay of the soldiers, but he was *necessary* now, so long as Niccolò remained alive, and he could find means of getting him into their hands without scandal or uproar.

"You know that, heretofore, I have cared very little about the risk of my life," answered Troilo ; then, smiling a little, he added, "but, to tell you how it is, in our present situation, I begin to think that my skin is worth some ducats more than it was a month ago, and, if it is possible for me to enact my part without losing my head, I shall like it all the better."

"Leave the care of that to me," said Baccio, resolutely, and, laying his hand upon him, he continued, "go, and play the Piagnone, like the others, and doubt nothing. I will find means to extricate you from all peril. You trust me, I presume ?"

Troilo said, in his heart, "Trust you, or not trust you, I must do as you say," then he said aloud :

"Well, Messer Baccio, you see that I do not stand haggling about perils, and you will remember this, when there is time : now let me go, and we will hope for the best."

"Go, and be of good courage," said Baccio, "I have plenty of nooses, and I shall know how to draw you out of any difficulty, but," and here he raised his voice and his finger, to give more force to his words, "judgment and prudence : and, consider, this is the last hardship, and after that, you will have nothing to do, but to eat, drink and be merry."

Troilo went out, muttering between his teeth, "last hardship ; I wish it might be, in good earnest ; as it is, it is one more than I wish it was."

However, not being able to do otherwise, for, with the Baccio of the *present*, master, so to say, of Florence, it would not do to joke, as he used to do with the Baccio of the *camp*, when all was uncertain and full of perils, he resigned himself to execute punctually, and at whatever risk, all that had been entrusted to him.

Niccolò, in the meantime, with great delicacy and not without danger, for it was no easy matter to traverse the streets in these times of confusion, proceeded to the door of San Marco

He knocked in the peculiar way by which he was accustomed to make himself known; the porter demanded, from within, if he were alone, and, being answered in the affirmative, cautiously opened the door, only half way, and, having admitted him, closed it in haste with all the bolts and bars it had. This man was an old lay-brother, who had continued in that office from the time of Fra Girolamo, a simple-minded man, exceedingly zealous for the interests of the convent and the Piagnoni party.

"Excuse me, Messer Niccolò," he said, "for asking if you were alone, but I still remember the events of '98,* and it seems to me that those times are about to return. Oh! the scourges foretold by our holy master are not ended. God have pity upon us!"

"Take courage, Fra Gaudenzio, for He does not abandon those who do not forsake Him," said Niccolò, as he passed on, and the old Frate, joining his hands, said, "Amen!" and, following Niccolò with his eye, and observing his slow, unsteady, painful walk, as he passed along the first court-yard, "Poor old man," said the Frate, and, shaking his head and sighing, he re-entered his cell beside the gate.

The utter exhaustion of Niccolò, too natural to an old man, agitated as he had been by the emotions and the sufferings of those last days, was increased by the state of the atmosphere. Over the valley of the Arno, and over Florence, were extended dark, heavy clouds, forming a stratum, which, like a lid, compressed the air, rendering it so inert, that not a breath, not a current stirred, to restore or refresh the respiration, in that dead, heavy sultriness. The lamps of the cloister, which, placed at a great distance from each other, served as guides and signals in its obscurity, rather than as means of lighting it, burned with straight, immovable flame, which illuminated only a small, round spot, on the wall to which they were affixed, or on the pavement beneath, and all the rest was darkness: but, darker than all, were the vaulted arches, which, on other occasions, revealed the sky, excepting that, in the angle towards the west, there gleamed, from time to time, a pale, whitish light, which, flickering on the façade of the cloister, reflected there a moment its pale, vacillating brightness, delineating the small windows of the cells, the lines of architecture, the well in the middle of the court-yard, and, then suddenly vanishing in an obscurity blacker than before; and at the same time, one seemed to hear

* He alludes to the attack on the convent by the enemies of Fra Girolamo.

(and it was so distant and feeble that it seemed impossible to know from whence it came) a deep, continued, thundering sound, like that of a heavy body dragged along a subterranean vault.

Niccolò, slowly, and with difficulty ascended the stairs, and found himself in the corridor of the dormitory on the first floor, towards the Via del Maglio, and he stopped there a moment to rest before the *Annunziata*, painted in fresco on the opposite wall by Fra Angelico.

The light of a small lamp burning before it, showed the simple and celestial beauty of the face of the Virgin, the devout and graceful production of a pure heart filled with love, the august and awe-inspiring form of the Archangel, with his broad, wide-spread, tapering wings, his flowing locks, his rich robe reaching to his feet, which displayed rather than concealed his person, and the slender columns and arches of a portico under which the two figures are placed. Before this picture, Niccolò bowed his head, and clasped his hands in prayer for a few moments, asking celestial aid for the undertaking in which he was about to engage, and making a vow, that, if he were prospered, to erect, at his own expense, a church in honor of the Virgin: then, suddenly raising his eyes, he saw at the summit of the arch, on which rests the frame work of the roof of the dormitory, the ill omened device of the Medici, placed there by Cosimo the elder, the founder of the convent.

This escutcheon seemed to him like a fatal vision, like the sad signal of a fatality that was pursuing him: he turned away his eyes with disdain, quitted the spot, turned to the right, and at the distance of a few cells, found that of Fra Zaccaria da Fivizzano.

The two friends embraced without speaking, and the Friar readily surmised, that the coming of Niccolò at that late hour, was not without grave reasons. Fixing his eyes steadily upon him, and still keeping his hands on his shoulders, where he had placed them in embracing him, "Is it possible," he said, "that there remains to us any hope?"

"In *men*, very little, Fra Zaccaria, but I have much in God. I am come here this night, because I cannot believe that He has abandoned us altogether, that in His wrath He has resolved upon our ruin. I cannot persuade myself, that our holy martyr has forsaken this unhappy people, and that he will not aid them, will not from heaven defend them against the tyrants as he did while living on earth amongst us. Oh! surely, I believe it most certain, that this is a trial, a terrible trial, which *God permits to put our faith to the test*. Let us come out of

it, victors. Let us not suffer our faith to shake, to wander. Let us not defile ourselves in the presence of the *abomination*, and the living God will not fail His faithful ones. He will not give them into the hands of His enemies: and after the *tribulation*, after the *proof*, joy and victory will follow."

After these words, to which the thoughts and feelings of the courageous Frate fully corresponded, for he was as zealous as Niccolò, and being in the vigor of his age, his feelings had more force, the old man explained to him his design. He said he had sent his young men to reanimate the fallen hopes of the Piagnoni, to assemble them and conduct them that night to the convent, to consult upon the measures to be resolved upon, which should appear best to them in this extremity: and opening his mind at full length, he had no difficulty in inspiring the Frate with his own spirit, and the trust and the constancy which animated him: and they resolved to go immediately to the Superior, Fra Benedetto, and inform him of what was going on.

They found the poor old man already in bed, and if he was terrified on hearing the daring proposition of Niccolò, we cannot assert it, though it may readily be supposed, knowing his timid and quiet nature: for, destitute of moral strength, he was accustomed to give himself up to others, and he was more disposed to take this part now than ever, on an occasion so perilous and difficult, for which he felt that he had neither remedy, nor counsel, nor courage. His words were full of sighs, lamentations and doubts. The conclusion was, to leave everything to the judgment of Niccolò, praying God to protect the city and the convent, from the ruin which was impending over it.

Leaving Fra Zaccaria in this frame of mind, Niccolò descended into the chapel to await the others, and Fra Zaccaria went from cell to cell, awaking and notifying the brethren, beginning with those in whom he had the greatest confidence, until the whole convent was aroused, and the brethren were seen issuing from the corridors, talking over the news among themselves, walking two and three together towards the church, or making little conversational groups: some pensive and thoughtful, others ardent and loquacious. They were robed in their white tunics, and many carried lighted torches or candles in their hands, the light from which, striking from beneath, upon their, for the most part, severe and truly manly faces, by its *chiaroscuro*, made them appear more angular, rough and wrinkled than ever.

The lights, the white color of the walls and of the *white tunics*, gave a still darker appearance to the rough, but wild

placed rafters of the roof which covered the dormitory, the cells beneath which, by a curious mode of construction, having a ceiling of their own, which diminished their size and protected them from the cold.

In short, all the family of the convent, which amounted to nearly two hundred monks, were assembled in church, and to the greater part of them who, for forty years, had, on many occasions, taken part in the affairs and deliberations of state; who were used to perils, insurrections and civil wars, this mysterious and nocturnal assemblage brought no terror, nor did it excite any surprise; for, in those times, the men even belonging to the classes ordinarily the least bold, had a fearless and valiant disposition, which the progress of refinement has cancelled in the society of the present day.

In the meantime, from a clock placed at the extremity of the dormitory, in a tall narrow case of dark walnut, in which moved the pendulum and hung the counter-weights, sounded the hour of midnight; in a few seconds, the clock in the vestry struck, then that of the *campanile*; it was the appointed hour, and it would not be long before the first comers would appear. A friar was sent to the garden gate, and charged to open to those only, who should pronounce as agreed upon, the words, "San Marco and Liberty."

CHAPTER XXX.

Niccolò, having descended into the chapel, was kneeling before the principal altar. A sacristan was lighting four candles there, by which the darkness was a little rarefied, for the vastness of the place could not be said to be illuminated by so little light; but now and then, it was fully and brilliantly lighted by the lightning which flashed on the panes of the immense windows, and which, tinged by the varied and vivid colors of the glass, ran through the church with a glory like that of the rainbow, remaining for a moment tremulous and dazzling, then, suddenly disappearing, the renewed obscurity making the rays of the candles seem more dim and feeble than ever. Their flames, erect and motionless until then, began suddenly to shake and bow themselves, and dwindle away as if nearly extinguished; for the storm which had gathered in the mountains of Mugello was approaching. The damp, fresh wind which usually precedes the whirlwind, had already arisen, and, entering through the chinks and apertures of the windows, with a shrill, discordant whistle, or rushing in under the doors of the cloister, through the entries and passages of the convent, with opposite and rapid current, slammed doors, shutters and casements, making curtains and hangings fly out straight from the wall, as if giving warning to prepare for the approaching tempest.

The thunder grew louder and nearer; it seemed to traverse the upper regions of the air, gathering itself in the distance, and then bursting overhead with the crash of artillery, and passing, with a prolonged and distant roar, into the hollows of the hills. The first drops of rain began to strike on the window panes; they gradually increased in number and quantity, till, to their noise was added the minute, dry clatter of the hail rebounding from the roofs, eaves, walls and windows. At every clap of thunder the uproar, increased, as also the howling of the wind, which could be heard devastating the trees of the convent garden.

But of all this commotion, Niccolò was hardly conscious.

for, full of his subject, he had no mind for anything but that, and the desire to recommend himself to God for the undertaking. But through the changed state of the atmosphere, and the coolness consequent upon the storm, feeling his spirits refreshed, and the overpowering lassitude, which oppressed him, give place to new strength, and almost to new life, he was more than ever disposed to hope for the best.

The church, meantime, was filling with the brotherhood. Fra Zaccaria, approaching Niccolò, said, "This bad weather is in our favor: our people can now leave their houses more securely, without danger of being observed."

Just then, Lamberto appeared at the door of the vestry, completely drenched by the rain, the water dripping from him as if he had been drawn out of a river. Niccolò fixed his eyes upon his face as he was approaching him, to read there the result of his mission, but he perceived that it announced no great success. When he was close to him, he said, with a disheartened look:

"I have done what I could — I have picked up some of the lower class, however, some of your workmen of S. Maria, those men are all ready to do what you wish. I have been into house after house, and not one has flinched, even the women, and they, first of all, encouraged the men, and said, 'Go, go, for Messer Niccolò knows well what is best, and then, are we not living upon his bread? Now, then, it is your duty to risk your life for him, and whatever he is disposed to do.' And so these poor people consulted each other, and began to make their arrangements, and you will soon see them appear in good condition — but the other *popolani*, those who are better off," and here he shook his head sighing. "These people are quite another sort — some have fled — some have concealed themselves — others are missing — and those few that I have seen, talked foolishly, some talked utter nonsense. 'What,' said they, 'do you want us to do? You might as well tell us to divide up our fists at the sky!' And many renounced Fra Girolamo, and said, 'We are clear-sighted at last!' And they cursed the day and the hour in which they believed on him. Perhaps it was my ill-luck. Perhaps your children and Troilo may have had better luck. They will soon appear: let us hope they will bring better tidings." When Lamberto ended, he withdrew to a little distance, and Niccolò exclaimed:

"Then they say that God has abandoned them — that He would not aid them, when it is, *they* themselves, who have abandoned and denied His prophet. Oh! poor people! poor Florence!" And crossing his arms upon his breast, he re-

mained thoughtful a moment, then added, "Now let us wait for the others."

The Frati who had pressed around Lamberto, to learn what news he brought, drew off, widening the circle about him, showing by the expression of their countenances and the words they dropped; more discouragement than surprise; some of them formed little groups of three and four, some seated themselves on the benches, some walked up and down the church, conversing according to the different notions and passions which swayed them, one party seeing in the surrender of the city, nothing but the ruin of the popular state, spoke of freedom, and lamented its loss; others, knowing that the authority held by the convent over affairs of state in the time of the Republic, would be taken away, bewailed themselves, saying: "Shall we be conquered a second time by the Frati Minori?" and the lay bell-ringer added, almost weeping, "Will our poor bell have to make another journey to San Francesco?"* Many of those who cared most of all for the things of religion, and the holy usages maintained by the exhortations and the example of Fra Savonarola, lamented, saying, "If the Medici return, who can restrain this people? They will go on again, and worse than before, with their games, their hostelryes, and their dishonesty — and to think, that the Medici themselves founded this very convent! Oh! may God defend us from such founders of churches as these, for they even make use of holy deeds to deceive the people!" And there were also some, who, in their hearts, had never put much faith in Fra Girolamo, although in their quiet way of living, they had never shown it, and among these, were sneers and furtive glances, as they repeated among themselves, in an undertone, the famous words of the Frate,† "Sei tu chiaro?" The fury of the storm increased, and the scene seemed to belong more to the other world than this; those white figures, assembled under the antique vaults of San

* A great degree of hostility and monkish rivalry had existed between the Frati Minori, and those of San Marco from the time of Fra Girolamo, whose ruin they did much in accelerating. After his death, they obtained leave from the Signoria, to take away the bell of the Dominicans, and carry it to their convent of San Francesco, from whence it was afterwards restored to its original place.

† In 1496 the Emperor Maximilian came to Leghorn with the soldiers of the Duke of Milan, and the fleet of the Venetians, to change the Government of Florence. The Florentines gave themselves up for lost, and the enemies of Savonarola, went about saying among themselves, "Sei tu chiaro, che questo frate ci ha ingannati?" (Is it not clear that this Frate has deceived us?) The rout of the Emperor succeeded, according to the prediction of Fra Girolamo, who preached a sermon repeating in his favor, the words of his adversaries, which was always called the sermon of "Sei tu chiaro?"

Marco, wandering about in that semi-obscurity, the four reddish flames lighted at the principal altar, now shining alone, and now superseded by the brief and rapid glitter of the lightning, the dash of the rain, the frequent claps of thunder, which appeared to strike the walls, and make them tremble, the fury of the wind, rushing through the narrow passages, chinks, and crevices, producing, now, a shrill whistle, now, as if imitating the human voice, it seemed a howl, a long lament, and then like the distant roar of wild beasts.

Some of the Frati, less bold or more credulous than the others, began to think that evil spirits must be engaged in this grand commotion of the elements; it seemed to them that these mysterious and sinister sounds issued from infernal throats, from some nocturnal meeting of demons, in their immediate vicinity, who were preparing to make a descent upon the convent, and, an old lay brother said, making the sign of the cross, and sighing :

"This night also, if I mistake not, the nuns of S. Lucia will have a little rest, as was the case when the blessed Fra Girolamo was conducted into the Palagio.*

Some young novitiates, at these words, uttered in so serious a manner, and with an expression of countenance so grave and suspicious, looked at the old man, with wide-open mouth and eyes, as if to ask and expect a more open explanation, and the lay-brother, with a melancholy visage, went on :

"Ah! he who has grown old in this convent, has had to pass through a good many ugly scenes. There have been times when the enemy has left us no repose, day nor night, and did the same with those poor women of S. Lucia. But, then, Fra Girolamo was living; and, there was that holy man, Fra Domenico da Pescia. You ought to have seen what work *he* had with the demon. You know the cell which Fra Giordano now occupies, with that picture of our Lord tempted by that great black Satan, with the tail and the great horns. Well, one day Fra Domenico, I do not know what put it into his head, took a broom and swept him, and derided him in various ways. Well, what would you have? We were turned out early that night, there was no such thing as sleep." The novitiates here pressed closer together, casting a suspicious glance around them, as if they expected to see some wicked spirit frisking through the church.

* On the night in which the convent of San Marco was stormed, so says P. Pacifico Burlanacchi, the nuns of S. Lucia suffered no molestation from evil spirits, who said, the next morning, through their mouths, "This night we have been occupied with the army who were against the Frati."

"It might have been two hours after midnight, when, all at once, a terrible pounding was heard, and a smothered cry. What do you think it was? It was the evil spirit, who, to revenge himself, was giving Fra Domenico so many bastinados that he left him crippled. And I, after this affair — for I am not very brave — when I went to sweep the cell, and saw this Lucifer, I recommended myself to God, and said, in my heart:

"Lasciami stare, lasciami stare,
Che non ti fo nè ben nè male."
("Let me alone, let me alone,
For I do you neither good nor harm.")

"You may imagine, if he served Fra Domenico so, who was in *sacris*, what he would do with me, a poor lay-brother. He would have strangled me. But God and the Madonna aided me."

"Now, we have no reason to complain, we are tolerably quiet; but *then* — some nights we could not find means to get down into the choir — there were great ugly black cats on the beams of the roof, with eyes like live coals; there were salamanders, that went like squibs through the wall, and you could not see whence they came, or whither they went; sometimes you would see them stand upright in the flame of the lamp, and sport in the blaze. I know all about it — compared with that, hell would have seemed a cool place. Then, when you turned a corner of the dormitory, you would see, in the distance, standing up straight against the wall, a dwarf, like an Ethiop, all eyes and mouth. Oh! Lord help us! for these eyes have seen very horrible things."

"And did the same things happen to the nuns?" asked a novice, in a low, trembling voice.

"The same, and worse. The devil entered into them, one after another, and — poor girls — but they were not to blame, it was the enemy; and then they sent, in all haste, for Fra Domenico — and, when something prevented him from going himself, and he sent another, with the bible, and a command to the demon to go away, you ought to have heard how he cried out, 'Here he is, here he is, with his trumpery book;' and, in speaking of our holy prophet, instead of Fra Girolamo, he would say, 'Fra Gira gli uomini, Fra Giraffa,' and other such nonsense. Enough! let us thank God that this tribulation has taken him from us."

These words were heard by an old monk, a thin, spare man, reduced, by penances, to the appearance of those natural mummies, such, for instance, as are seen in the convent of the Capuchins at Rome, which, clothed in the monkish habit, show

nothing but the face, covered with a dry, tanned, and wrinkled skin. This man, who, in his whole life, had never had an hour of peace, so much was he tormented by his scruples, said, in a shrill, trembling voice :

"The reason that the demon no longer torments us, or makes himself visible to us, I will tell you, brothers (and here a sigh). It is because things are going but too much in his own fashion, in this convent. In the time of Fra Girolamo, it was very different (another sigh); we are growing extravagant in food, in dress, and in everything, and instead of attending to the spirit, instead of *insanire pro Christo*, we have turned to the pride of worldly studies — the evening prayers are now said after supper, contrary to the orders of Fra Girolamo — the bible, which the Frati then always had under the arm, is laid aside and neglected — in fact, little is thought of the internal, my brethren. Why, then, should the demon oppose us, when we are travelling in the very road he wishes us to take?" and here, a last sigh, equivalent to four ordinary ones.

Just then, the eyes of all were directed to Niccolò, attracted by a louder murmur of voices, occasioned by the arrival of his sons, together with Troilo and Fanfulla, around whom, the Frati, scattered through the church, quickly collected. The news brought by these men was, in no respect, better than that brought by Lamberto, it appeared clearer than ever, that they must resolve to yield to fortune. Averardo began to speak in his usual abrupt and excited manner, and, after having enumerated what he had done, which reduced itself, in substance, to the same conclusion arrived at by Lamberto, he said, raising his head fiercely at a vivid flash of lightning, which scintillated through the church, followed by a tremendous peal of thunder :

"May you burn to ashes those vile cowards, who prefer living as slaves, to dying as freemen."

At this imprecation, coming at such a moment, from the mouth of a man, who, by his formidable aspect alone, was sufficient to inspire fear, the hair of the bystanders stood on end with horror.

The Frate with the scruples, covered his face with both hands, and murmured, between his teeth, "*Sanctus Deus, Sanctus fortis, Sanctus immortalis*;" and Niccolò, raising his hand with authority, towards his son, and looking steadily at him, said :

"Averardo, you are in church."

And this man, who would have met, unmoved, the gaze of a whole army, could not sustain that of Niccolò, but cast down his eyes and remained silent.

Bindo then rose, and advancing boldly to the front, (for, at his age, who doubts or despairs?) he said :

“ What should you say, if I should tell you that I have been to see Manelli, the Agolanti, and the Spini, and that I have found these young men ready and prompt to do whatever you wish? And, although the old men, the fathers of many, child and opposed them, the sons assured me, that they would manage to steal out secretly, and that to-night, they would be found with us. For myself, I do not despair, no — for there are plenty of brave young men in Florence, God be thanked. Only let us begin, and then, doubt not, all will rise and join us.”

But the confidence of Bindo did not communicate itself to the minds of those who heard him, and, on looking around, upon all those faces, an inquiet, painful expression of doubt was seen depicted, and Niccolò himself, although it was well known that he would make every effort to appear composed and serene, betrayed in his face the anxiety by which he was agitated.

Turning his eyes upon Fanfulla, who stood very erect with his usual impassible visage, neither glad nor sad, and wearing over his coat of mail the scapulary of St. Dominic, united in his person the monk and the soldier; he looked at him as if he wished him to give his opinion, and Fra Zaccaria, expressing Niccolò's wishes, said :

“ Here, Fra Giorgio, you know more of this business than we ; does it seem to you there is any way — that anything can be done? ”

And all eyes were rivetted upon Fanfulla, who, raising his eyebrows, thrusting out his upper lip, and bobbing his head up and down, began to whistle through his teeth, anything but a good augury. At length, laying his hand on his hair and his forehead, and partly scratching his head, and partly settling the bandage of his wound, he said :

“ Not being a Florentine, I am not so well acquainted as you with these citizens, and so, going out this evening, I said to myself, I will go among those whom I *do* know, I will talk with the soldiers and learn how they feel — because — you see — the spirit of this business — not to wrong the citizens of the militia, than whom I have never seen braver or more worthy men — but, in short, it must be said, that twenty of those pikes grown old in war, who from babies, as you may say, have been used to discipline, and to have one eye always on the cat, and the other on the frying-pan ; I mean one eye on the enemy, and the other on the standard, and not to break their ranks in the midst of the firing ; a sign from the sergeant or the captain, and they

have already understood it, and even without it, they know what they ought to do; in short — you understand me — twenty such fellows are worth more than a hundred men, let them be as brave as you will, who do not know the business, who now do too much and now too little; and who do not know that a battalion of soldiers ought to be like a *saw*, where the teeth are many, but the will which moves them one alone, and then, they will work to advantage. Well, then, I went to the barracks of the paid troops. I knew them all before. I had made the acquaintance of some of them sword in hand. First, I went to those in the rear of Santa Croce: I entered; Fanfulla here, Fanfulla there — Good day, what's the news? I said to myself, I'll try them in this fashion. I'll begin to abuse them:

"Fine honors, by Christo and the Madonna!" but he had no sooner said the words, than perceiving that he was representing the scene too much to the life, he checked himself, and said:

"Fine honors you have acquired! To give up the town by agreement, when not a hand's breadth of the bastion is harmed — when you lack neither powder nor balls — you have not yet eaten the leather of your shoes. If I had known that this was the game, I would never have moved from San Marco. I only said this for the sake of talking, for, poor fellows, they had borne themselves well, but with soldiers, it is necessary to talk so, and then they began to get warm and talk: some said one thing, and some another. 'It is all owing to the Signoria.' 'It is that traitor of a Malatesta,' and some shrugged their shoulders, and some swore, and some said, 'We are here yet, let them that pay us, show us the way!' And one captain of Guasconi said, a brave fellow, — we were together at the taking of Brescia, — 'The day before yesterday, if the Palagio had consented, I would have attacked with my troops the soldiers of Malatesta, they were not willing! Now it is too late.'"

Fanfulla was silent for a moment, then, shrugging his shoulders and opening wide his arms, he said:

"He is right — what could I say to him? In war, the opportunity is everything, — you have let it slip, — the worse for you."

During this harangue of Fanfulla, many of the silk and woollen operatives, and laborers from the lower classes, had arrived one after another, all more or less armed, according to their ability: some of the young men to whom Bindo had spoken, had arrived, but all together amounted to not more than two hundred persons. The time was passing — it was some time since the clock of the vestry had struck two: no more made their appearance, and those who had come thither, seeing their

small number, and observing the discouragement painted on the faces of the Frati, and even of Niccolò himself, looked in each other's faces, and in their hearts, repented of having left their homes.

Niccolò was perplexed; his mind was harassed by many opposing thoughts. To send these people away, and renounce the last hope, seemed to him too hard, too bitter, and to push on these few men to a desperate part, to certain death, was what he could not resolve to do. While he labored under this state of uncertainty, the monks had arranged benches on two sides of the church, towards the altar, where they and the most respectable part of the assembly seated themselves, and the remainder, standing at the other extremity, enclosed the square on that side, the centre of which remained empty. Niccolò sat down in a large arm-chair, placed at the upper end of the church, and near him sat Fra Zaccaria and the sons of Niccolò, and they were talking together in a low tone, when an old man entered the midst of the square, from the door of the sacristy, whose attire showed him to be a poor laborer; over his ordinary dress, he had buckled a rusty steel corslet, and he had a sword at his side. The aspect of this person was that of a man, whom age and sufferings had brought to the extremity of life, but this life now seemed concentrated in his glance, where burned a fire, which gave evidence of a fierce and desperate resolution.

The old man held by the hand a pale and meagre boy, of about twelve years, who appeared more surprised than alarmed at finding himself in such a place, and in the midst of that grave assembly.

Niccolò knew this man, who had always been extremely zealous for the doctrine of Fra Girolamo, who had lent his aid in the defence of the convent, and who had ever since, in all times and under all governments, persevered constantly in the same opinions, using every effort to maintain them among the people, so far as his poverty and limited influence would allow him the opportunity.

"Oh! Maestro Simone!" said Niccolò to him, as he approached him with the boy, "what brought you here with your Bertino?"

"Piero, his father, and my blessed son," answered the old man, "died fighting for our liberty—I and this child are left alone in the house—alone in the world—you know it—we have no one else, and therefore I do not care to live any longer, and I have brought with me this poor orphan, to live or die with the last defenders of Florence."

Niccolò raised his eyes and hands to heaven, and said, rubbing the open palms :

" Oh ! why had not all the citizens, the courage of this poor laborer ? Why did the rulers of this city, whose duty it was, to furnish an example to the whole population, sink under the weight of misfortune, when it behoved them rather to support it with honor ? "

And gradually warming, and raising his voice as he went on, he continued :

" Such was not the example left us by our ancestors, who dared to face popes, emperors and kings, and defend against all the liberty of Florence ! Oh ! Florence, at the foot of thy walls, fell the pride of the Emperor Henry of Luxembourg, and the whole force of the holy Roman empire ! The Emperor Maximilian, and this we have seen with our own eyes, in our own time, — had to flee before he had seen thy towers ! To Charles of France, who was within thy gates with the flower of his cavaliers, thou showedst thy face, when he strove to enslave thee, and King Charles was glad to save himself and his people, and thou remainedst honored, and in full possession of all thy rights. But, great God ! Is the present peril greater than those ? Are we different from the men of those times ? Are liberty, honor and religion no longer desirable ? Are slavery and infamy no longer an evil ? But is it possible, eternal God, that we are thus fallen in the mire of degradation ? Is it possible, that such is the weight of our sins, that Thou hast thus abandoned Thy people ? Oh, citizens ! oh, children ! Then we shall have to utter the tremendous words, we, Florentines, shall have to say it, instead of rather dying a thousand times, ' Florence is extinct ! Florence is enslaved ! ' And we remain alive ! We return to our houses, to our wives and our children, for whom we ought to maintain the government left us by our predecessors. And what shall we tell them, when we ungird our swords, unspotted by blood, and throw them into a corner ? What shall we say to them ? What reasons shall we find, which will quiet them, and make them content to be, not free-men, but a herd of cattle, the property of the Medici ? And when these tyrants imbrue their hands in the blood, and seize upon the property of your children, will they not, when grown to men, have reason to curse you and call you cowards ? What is life, that one should be willing to preserve it at such a price ? Think not that I speak thus, because I am an old man, and stake upon this throw but a few days, perhaps a few hours of life. Have I not sons ? Are not these who stand around me, my blood ? And am I sparing of it ? " And placing his hand on

the head of Binda, who stood next to him, he added, "Am I sparing of the blood of this youth, to whom, perhaps, might remain years and years of happy life? And since I bestow a gift like that upon my country, who can say that I do not give much more than my own life? Oh! citizens, have pity upon this unhappy country, for, perhaps, there is yet time! Oh! Jesus Christ our King, have pity upon Florence, for it is also Thy kingdom. *Parce, Domine!* Pardon our sins, pardon yet this once — spare the land thy vengeance — I — for the sins of all — offer to thee this unhappy head, I offer to thee, these my sons. Let my family become extinct — my blood, my name be erased from the face of the earth — but Florence! — Oh! let Florence be saved, be free, be happy!"

Weeping in the sight of all this assembly, without any effort to conceal tears, for which he felt he had no reason to blush, Niccolò ended his words, which were but the indispensable outpouring of the indomitable passion that was consuming him, rather than as a means by which he hoped to effect anything.

Dark and down-cast countenances, and a death-like silence, gave but a too clear and eloquent answer to the words of the old man.

The storm, driven off by the wind, was moving away in the distance, towards Volterra, but, from time to time, the lightnings still flashed, and the roar of distant thunder fell upon the ear.

Niccolò experienced a sense of grief, still more terrible than that which oppressed him when the surrender of the city was decided upon; now his last hope was lost, now Florence was fallen, for him irremissibly, now only, he felt that he had become the slave of the Medici.

With his elbows resting on his knees, and his forehead on the palms of his hands, he remained immovable, annihilated, so to say, by the immensity of his misfortune, and in that moment, he would have blessed God if He had sent him death. Unhappy old man! And so much yet remained for him to suffer!

The *popolani* and the workmen, who could respond only by silence to the vehement words of Niccolò, judging with that correct sense, which almost always belongs to uncultivated men, that it was madness to attempt further resistance, could not sustain the sight of the distress, the tears of this old man whom they had been accustomed to consider as their common father, as a being of a superior nature and intelligence. They were struck with consternation, to see him reduced, like others, to misfortune and human misery, and the love which they bore him, racked their hearts, and they reproached themselves as if

they were the cause of every trial, every evil which would now fall upon him. And while Niccolò still remained motionless, his head buried in his hands, they began to whisper among themselves, and some uttered sighs, which seemed almost like howlings, some thrust their hands in their hair, others writhed, and with the backs of their rough hands, wiped tears from their eyes, and all showed the greatest emotion and dissatisfaction; but, held in awe by the presence of so many of their superiors, they did not attempt to come forward, or move, or speak too loud.

These feelings growing stronger among them, they began to say to each other, in under tones, "Oh, we are the greatest wretches! Poor, noble old man! To have to see him weep in such a way! He, who has seen us all grow up! Who has always given us work! And in times of scarcity, who gave us bread, if not he? And now, when we are needed, shall we draw back? Shall we allow the nobles and rich men to say, that the populace, the poor are ungrateful? What say you, Sandro, and you, Bozza? Ought we not to come forward and throw ourselves at his feet, and ask his pardon, and tell him that we are ready, and that he may do with us what he will? Will you go? Shall I? Shall we all go? Let us go!"

Several answered boldly, and advancing, were followed by all the others; they broke into the empty square, and advancing swiftly towards Niccolò, who, at the noise of their footsteps, had raised his head a little, they threw themselves on their knees at his feet, those nearest to him, grasping his knees and his clothes, with humble and penitent countenances, and tearful eyes, they spoke all together, and so confusedly, that he could ill comprehend what they intended to say, only, that from the expression of their faces, the raised arms of the more distant ones, and the few intelligible words which his ear could detect now and then, as "Pardon" — "we repent" — "we are your children as long as we live" — and others of like import, Niccolò, soon surmised the feelings and intentions of these poor people. His heart was touched by this demonstration, and those of the by-standers were equally so.

Affectionately, he raised his hands, and laid them on the heads of those nearest him, who, seizing them with enthusiasm, covered them with kisses, then motioning them to be silent and rise up from their knees, after a little time, he obtained a cessation of the noise and the confused speaking, but they refused to rise from the earth.

"What do you wish, my children? Let one of you speak and tell me what you want?"

work? And in this siege, when
of our families, had it not been
died of hunger. And now, when
for the good of the city, for our
stirred, have not answered a word
beasts, we are *ignoramuses*,’ (in
sentence). “And now we have
cannot bear that—and you have
not have to weep, for we are here
have to do what you please—
long as there is life—as long
big as an ear, you see Messer.
your will; but cheer up! Come
tears. Let us see your face and
shall know that you have pardoned
with us. Oh! pardon us, Messer.
all extended their arms toward
pardon!” ●

CHAPTER XXXI.

"PARDON!" cried Niccolò, with a face overspread with an expression of sad and tender pity, "for what offence am I to grant you pardon, my poor children? Ah! no, it is no fault of yours, but of your rulers, of those who ought to have defended, but who have abandoned you. You have not responded to my words. What response could you give? Ah! I see it, I know it, that for us there is no remedy, that we are condemned by God. When I spoke to you as I did, it was because I could not see dispersed, the hopes and the labors of a whole life; I could not see my country oppressed, fallen into the hands of enemies and traitors, and remain mute and with dry eyes. But I know it, I know it, children; what can you do now to prevent it? Who can oppose, who can escape from the judgment of God? And this judgment is now clear and manifest. He sent us His prophet as He did to the Ninevites; *they* repented and were saved, *we* have hardened ourselves in our sins, and evil ought to come upon us; it is just! *Justus es Domine, et rectum judicium tuum.* And then they say that *He* has deceived us; *we*, wretches, have deceived ourselves. For He, indeed, promised us mercy, but on condition of our turning ourselves to God, and abandoning our abominable vices. Have we done so? Now, rise up my children, go to your homes, and may God bless you a thousand times. This, perhaps, may be the last time we shall see each other, and if I have ever done anything to offend you, I pray you to pardon me — always remember Niccolò, who loved you as children, even till death — remember, if happier days ever come for Florence, that the country may rise again, and that you ought always be ready to do your duty towards her. Forget not God, who is our origin, and ought to be our only end; and pray for my soul, pray that He may make me worthy to quit this world in His holy favor, and to accept virtuously that death which it shall please Him to send me. If I have — and so it must end — if I have to fall under the axe of the Pallesechi."

At these words, as if at the explosion of a mine, all the *popolani*, who had remained until then, humbled and silent on

their knees, started on their feet, fierce and threatening, and raising their clenched fists to heaven, and gnashing their teeth swore to die in defence of Niccolò; and Bozza, raising his voice above the others, cried out:

"No, *we* are here, and before they touch a hair of your head they shall make dead men of us and half of Florence."

Niccolò, motioning with his uplifted hand, quieted this commotion, and then said:

"I thank you, children, I thank you, and God knows how sincerely. But if I would not let you risk your lives in behalf of the city, you may well think I would not suffer it in my own. Such is not the will of God. Now, go and pray for me, as I shall pray for you."

Troilo, who, during this exciting scene, had neither stirred nor opened his mouth, now thought the time had come to bring forward his scheme, and, advancing in front of the others, he said in a bold, resolute manner:

"Messer Niccolò, citizens, listen to me, for it has just occurred to me that there is one hope left."

All turned at these words, and fixed their eyes upon him for no one expected such words at such a moment, and less of all from Troilo, who continued:

"Yes, there is one way open to us, — dubious, difficult, it is true, but we are reduced to such extremity that audacity and temerity may be called prudence. Tell me who stands with the foot on the neck of Florence? Who holds her henceforth in its power, conquered, incapable of defence? The Imperial army. Can we hope to assault and rout that army with the forces of a terrified and divided city? Madness! But if you should be taught to defeat them with their own weapons. And the means of doing so, I hope I have found."

Niccolò threw his arms around the neck of the traitor, who modestly received his embrace, and continued: "You know how many nations this camp is composed, and what hate, jealousies and disputes arise among them every day. I, who alas! fought with them against this unhappy country, know one by one these Italian columns, and a thousand times have heard them curse the fortune which condemned them to fight for the benefit of foreigners against their own nation. Now, a case has just occurred — I heard of it this evening — that will admirably assist our design. Some Spanish foot soldiers killed two Italians, robbed them and threw them into a well; as the troops of Vitelli have taken vengeance on several Spaniards they are much excited against each other, and are ready at any moment to come to blows, only the Italians are weaker than

the rest of the camp; but if we join their side, they will be the stronger; we shall be able to rout the others, and remain masters of Florence — and if the thing succeed in the beginning, it will raise all the people, and we shall not have to fear Malatesta, who is strong only so long as he is backed by the entire army."

Niccolò could hardly wait to let him finish speaking, and, raising his voice, he exclaimed:

"He speaks the truth. Who would have thought of such a plan? God bless thee, son. Thou art our salvation."

Fanfulla, smiling with complacency, added: "It is not a bad thought," and Lamberto and the sons of Niccolò, and, one after another, the monks pressed around Troilo, discussing his scheme, and turning and twisting it every way, they approved it more and more, and were convinced that the success of the attempt, though by no means certain, was probable enough to induce them to try it.

Fully persuaded, they embraced each other, and rejoicing together, began to make arrangements to begin the work without delay: for, the storm having ceased, and the sky no longer obscured by a cloud, the dawn had already appeared, lighting up the whole east with a mild, placid glow, and there was no time to be lost.

"Before we set out," said Niccolò to Fra Zaccaria, "please celebrate the mass for us, for we must begin with God, if we would have Him aid us."

The Frate went into the vestry and returned in a few moments, arrayed for the service, and commenced the mass, to which all listened in silence, and with that fervor of prayer, which is excited by the presence of imminent peril. But Troilo, who, in the meantime, was kneeling with the others, and who appeared as much absorbed in devotion as the rest, was saying to himself: "Now, then, we shall have to march off straight to the camp — there will be a fight without doubt. And Baccio will think of getting me out of the scrape, I believe, as I think to turn Frate. And how shall I let him know what is going to happen? I must find Michele, at any rate."

He could reckon upon this servant of his. This same Michele, whom we found, if the reader recollects, at the Torre del Gallo, and who had remained in camp as long as the siege lasted, had now come to Florence, so instructed by Troilo, and without suffering himself to be seen in the house of the Lapi, went running about in different directions, so that Troilo might meet him often, and he was to be ready at a sign from his master, for any emergency.

The mass being ended, all received the communion, Troile with the rest; and on returning from the altar, under color of seeking a corner apart, where he could attend without disturbance to his devotions, he went into one of the chapels, and here, turning his back to the church, bending over, and resting against a bench, he drew from his bosom a slip of paper and a bit of crayon, with which he had provided himself, and wrote in haste:

"They are going into the camp to fraternize with the Italian troops; they will attempt to get the city troops in motion; finally, they will rise at the uproar — therefore, be on the alert. Don't forget that I have no way of getting out of the midst of these fellows, if you do not aid me."

He folded the paper, and concealed it in his sleeve, thinking to himself, "On going out from here, Michele will show himself, and I can send it to Baccio."

Niccolò, in the meantime, having ended his devotions, had risen from his knees, and, collecting around him all the bystanders, was making a brief address, such as the limits of the time, and the importance of the case demanded. Fatigue, anxiety, and, more than all, the night's watching, had exhausted the strength of the poor old man; and much as he desired it, he felt utterly incapable of going with the others in this last enterprise; the thought of himself, and the peril to which he would be exposed, would not have been sufficient to detain him, if he could have believed that he would be of use in any way, but he knew that, instead of being an assistance, he would only be a hindrance to the young men, who would have enough to do to think for themselves, without the additional care of thinking for him.

"Go," said he, at last, embracing them one after another, "go, and though I cannot accompany you in person, I shall be with you in spirit, and in my prayers; and those of you whom I shall not see again in this world, I shall see in heaven."

As he said these words, it was Bindo's turn to embrace his father; a sad presage ran through the mind of the old man, (who can avoid it in such moments,) he thought "Perhaps this very boy I shall not see again till we meet in heaven!"

Niccolò exerted more than human strength to restrain and swallow the tears that were ready to pour in torrents; he knew how important it was for him to show himself strong at this moment, and crushing every other feeling, he said, with upraised brow, and hands extended towards his sons:

"Oh, Florence! Oh, my country, nothing remains to me but these lives! I give them to thee!"

Saying these words, he sank upon a seat, covered his eyes with his hands, and remained a moment almost lost, and ready to sink under such terrible and repeated shocks; a confused hum sounded in his ears, and feeling the force of his intellect shaken and enfeebled, he could not tell whether it were all a dream, or whether he really heard the noise and the footsteps of his sons and the people as they went out of the church.

After a little while, his strength somewhat revived, and opening his eyes and looking about him, he saw at his side Fra Zaccaria and a few of the Frati praying, the others had all gone away; they had gone into the cloister, and before going out into the square, Troilo said:

"Everything depends on our arriving safe at the barracks, and although there is no great rigor used at the gates, and communication is left free between the citizens and the camp, still I do not think it is well to go out from here together, — that might excite suspicion — but let two or three depart at a time — and let the place of meeting be Giramonte, where Signor Alessandro Vitelli is lodged — as I told you, it was in *his* company that the disturbance arose — we will begin with them. Now let me go out alone into the square, to see if towards the Servi, or the Via Larga, there is any impediment to be feared. I will take a turn round, and be here in a flash."

Troilo went out, and Averardo looking after him, said: "If any one had told me, that he would become one of us, I should have given him the lie, and now, he is the most zealous of all."

"Oh! did not I tell you so?" exclaimed Bindo, "he was led astray by bad habits, by knavish friends, but at heart he is a brave young man, and now his deeds show it."

While these people, with words much more profuse than we record, were extolling this knave to the skies, he, having gone out into the square, found it deserted, but, turning his eye around, he saw from behind the corner of the Via della Sapienza, directly on a line with the corner stone, the third part of a face, so that only one eye and a little piece of the nose were visible. He directed his way to that place, and found his servant concealing himself behind the corner.

He put the note in his hand, saying hurriedly, "Run with all the speed you have, and carry that to Messer Baccio, and tell him — remember it well — that I shall go out of the Porta S. Giorgio within half an hour, and that will serve him as a guide — now run, and if you don't arrive in time, they may look for you in the other world — understand me — I am not joking."

The servant, who knew with whom he had to do, took to his

legs, and was out of sight in a moment, and Troilo went on, contriving how it would be possible to give Michele time to arrive, without exciting suspicion in the others, at last, re-entering the convent, he said, in order to gain a few minutes:

"I saw several soldiers coming up through the Via del Cocomero, they are going to mount guard—let us wait a little." At last, when it appeared time, they began to go out, three or four at a time, agreeing among themselves that each company should take a different street. Troilo dexterously managed to be among the last, and finally went out with Bindo and Fanfulla, and they took their way towards the Porta S. Giorgio. They passed the Ponte alle Grazie, went through the Via dei Bardi over the hill, and Troilo, who had chosen to issue from this gate, the most distant of all, in order to give Baccio time to assist him in some way, went on building castles in the air, as to what he should do, not without some suspicion, that Baccio, having led him into this scrape, would leave him to get out of it as he could.

But Valori still had need of him, and, therefore, had not abandoned him. While Troilo and his companions were ascending the hill, without meeting any one, for the sun had scarcely come out from behind the hills of Vallambrosa, (Troilo, constantly throwing a glance before and behind, expecting some succor,) they saw, where the street, turning a little, brings into view the Porta S. Giorgio, a *frate minore* coming towards them, who seemed about to pass them without paying them any attention, but, suddenly stopping with the air of one who recognizes another, he said:

"Oh! you here, Messer Troilo? And where are you going?"

Troilo did not know the Frate, but it immediately occurred to him that he was sent by Baccio, and he was disposed to second him.

"And you, Padre, where do you come from?"

"I come from the camp—you know already, that the Franciscan habit is a better protection than a coat of mail, and with it one can go safe—but you, you are not going into the camp, eh?"

"What if I do go?"

"May God prevent it. Go away from here as quick as you can, and from Florence, for that would be still better. Do you not know, Don Ferrante has set four hundred florins upon your head, for your having fought with the Florentines? And here now, just outside the gate, I have passed through a company of German foot-soldiers, who say they know you by sight, and that if they meet you they will cut you to pieces."

Troilo, to carry out his part, thanked the Friar, and pretending to go forwards, the Friar seized him by the coat, affirming, that he would on no account, suffer him to rush on to inevitable death, and Fanfulla and Bindo, knowing that it would not answer to have a disturbance which would raise the whole camp, just as they were making preparations of so much importance, and that, at any rate, they alone would not be sufficient to rescue their companion, persuaded him to turn back, and Fanfulla, drawing him aside, so that the Friar should not hear, said :

“ Go, go, for in Florence you can still aid us, speaking to the soldiers as I did yesterday, and persuading them to come out as soon as they hear the attack begin, and in the midst of them, you need have no fear of the Germans.”

And without stopping to hear his reply, he turned his back upon Troilo, and went on with Bindo, while Troilo, laughing in his sleeve, descended the hill again in company with the Frate.

Fanfulla going on towards the gate with the young man, said :

“ It was lucky that we met that wooden-shoed friar, for if it had not been for him, God only knows what kind of work we should have had, for, in such cases, a mere nothing will ruin an undertaking.

Porta S. Giorgio was held by a numerous guard, whom Malatesta could trust, and who did not prevent the citizens from communicating with the camp, as we have said, excepting during the hours of night.

Fanfulla was recognized and saluted by several of these soldiers, and, as he crossed the threshold, beneath its massive arch, which is still seen for a long distance, some said one thing to him, and some another.

“ Oh ! there’s Fanfulla ! You are an early riser, Fra Bombardo ! Where are you going so early ? ”

Without stopping, he saluted them with the hand. “ We are going to see some of our friends at the camp, now that the cage is open. Adieu ! adieu ! christians, we shall see each other again, please God and the Madonna ! ”

And he passed on, without waiting for a reply.

If our reader was ever in Florence, if he ever took a walk outside of this gate, from whence Bindo and Fanfulla now issued, he will recollect, that, from the foot of the walls of Florence, looking towards the south, he sees gradually rise those beautiful hills, so gracefully undulating to their very tops, covered with dense woods of olive-trees, and rows of trellised

vines, partly of a verdant green, and partly of a grayish pearl, like that of the willow; he will remember those little villages, those little cottages so white and clean, peeping through the olive-trees, which excite the envy of him who looks at them, particularly, if his soul be filled with sadness, and he is meditating upon his trials, (as if such things could never penetrate these walls, this tranquil shade; and yet, who knows how many of them exist in that very spot!) will remember, in short, the placid, smiling aspect of the whole country, varied indeed as nature varies, but regular as a garden. Well, now at the time of our story, after being eleven months in the hands of the enemy, all this beauty was changed into a desolate, naked, muddy moor; there was no longer a trace of a hedge, or any division between the farms, the vines were uprooted, broken, trodden under foot, and buried in the earth, the olive trees cut down to their roots for fuel, or if any remained here and there, to attest the former luxuriance, their tops were cut off, their branches lopped and rendered shapeless, and their trunks hacked and pierced by cannon balls. These had ploughed and torn up the ground no less than the waters of the tempest. Such was the aspect of the ground between the walls and the trenches, which, like a zone, encircled the hill half way up Giramonte, consisting of a ditch, behind which rose a rampart, surmounted by stakes and manned by cannoneers.

While Bindo and Fanfulla were directing their way to a part of the hill where was the entrance to the camp, they could already perceive that something unusual was going on, from the deep murmur which reached their ears, the calls of one to another, and the running of the soldiers through the ways left open between the files of tents and pavilions, and along the trenches; for the encampment, lying on the slope of the hill, their eyes could embrace the whole, and they could see that there was some great internal commotion, like that which takes place in an ant-hill, when thrown into disorder.

At length they entered the camp, and continuing to ascend the hill, upon which Giramonte is seated, they passed through tents and barracks, constructed in a hundred ways, of boards, laths, stubble or mud, according to the best abilities of those who had to pass so many months there, and who had endeavored to make their accommodations as comfortable as possible; some of these, the least firmly built, had been overturned by the storm of the preceding night, and lay all entangled, and bristling with bent and broken stakes, reeds, or twigs, still dripping with rain-water, upon many of which, clothes were spread to dry in the sun, and upon others, were hung the armor, which

the boys and servants were busied in cleaning and furbishing in great haste, urged on to greater haste by their masters, who were all impatience to put it on. Among these servants, the long hair and womanly shape of many, betrayed what their masculine habit could not conceal. They were misguided women, in these times the whole class attached themselves to the camps; either carried off in the pillage of some town, and reduced by a coarse and beastly master to the lowest offices, or who, seduced and enamored, had fled from their homes with some soldier, who, becoming weary of them, tolerated them, only on condition, that they should take the place of a page and servant.*

From time to time, they passed sheds and booths, where the vivandières and sutlers were cooking food and selling wine: a greasy, dirty boy in attendance, upon long spits, placed before the fire, over which, at the same time, huge caldrons were boiling. At long tables, rudely put together, or barrels turned up for that purpose, were soldiers, hurriedly finishing the last mouthfuls, to join those who were hastening pell-mell to Giramonte, and shouts and peals of laughter saluted their ears.

They heard hundreds of voices, speaking in loud and angry tones, coarse and sonorous, hoarse and harsh, and every one had something to say about the *Spanish*, but who could get the sense of a single word, in this confused din, increased now by the barking of a dog, now by a drummer, trying his skill upon a chest, now by some unhappy pig, who, tied by a hind leg to a stake, was jumping about, and pulling away from the rope, and filling the air with squeals of distress?

Bindo and Fanfulla continued to ascend, passing through crowds of soldiers, and highly pleased to see how ready they were, to revolt and join their cause, finally reached the space occupied by the villa of Giramonte, a wide plain, from whence the view takes in all Florence, the mountains of Fiesole, and the valley of the Arno, from the hills of the Incontro, to those of Artimino. Here, on the brow of the hill that overlooks the city, was a battery of twenty-four pieces, cannons and culverins, separated by huge osier baskets, filled with stones and earth,

* " ——— E'l suo giubbone
 Le mette il tristo, e una berretta in testa
 E l'usa in ogni ufficio di garzone."

BENVIGLIO, *Satire*.

——— And his doublet
 The knave put on her, and a cap on her head,
 And made her serve in all the duties of a page.

and here the crowd of soldiers was denser than elsewhere, the windows of the villa were filled with them, they were mounted on the baggage wagons, they stood in long files along the walls of the house, they had climbed up on the cannons and the barricades, on all the high places, and were listening attentively to Lamberto, who, also mounted on one of the barricades, was speaking in a loud voice, and with vehement gesticulation, and when the two men arrived within sound of his voice, he was saying, (finishing a sentence, of which they had not heard the beginning,) "Of your comrades whom these brigands have assassinated! Vengeance upon them only! It is our whole nation whom they have assassinated, and whom they assassinate daily, in a thousand ways, that we are to avenge, and liberate ourselves at once from these robbers. But tell me, *Perdio!* If I do not tell you the truth, fling me into this trench, tell me — do we go into *their* country to live at *discretion*, to rob them, violate their women, cut their throats, stir them up to revolt, with a thousand stratagems, set them at war with one another, as mastiffs are urged on to fight, for the pleasure of seeing them tear themselves to pieces? And they are *always here!* now with one excuse, and now with another, now by sea and now by land; a troop of these wretches, miserable, barefoot and starving, must have some means of relief, — what shall they do? 'Let's go to Italy, to Italy, by all means!' But per Cristo, is the land where we were born, where our fathers were buried, to be the booty of robbers! Is it common property? Has God, who has given to every people land enough, so that they may live and die there in peace — where they may sow and reap the harvest — has He said, '*This land alone shall belong to whoever wants it, to whoever takes it; it shall belong to all, and those may reap there who have not sowed the seed?*' Are we then cursed by God? Are we bastards? Are we beasts? Do you wish to know? Without circumlocution, I have told you what we are. We *are* beasts and worse than beasts! For even the brutes, if disturbed in their dens, defend themselves with tooth and claw, without heeding if their enemy be stronger — and shall men do so much less than they? Must I not say that they are braver than we? All men are equal, it is only bad institutions, evil usages, that corrupt them and render them diverse, — many times as we have had to fight with them in fair war, hand to hand, who provoked it, they or we?"

"Look there," said he, (pointing to Fanfulla, whom he perceived among the crowd,) "There is my witness, if I do not tell the truth, let him call me a liar." All faces turned to see to whom he referred, and he went on:

"It is Fanfulla, one of the *thirteen of Barletta*, he can tell how things went—*who* conquered. And do you think, they had to send a company all through Italy to seek out the bravest, the most daring! Did they wait to collect taller, larger men than those of the enemy? To put two against one? They were thirteen of *them*, thirteen of our people, such as were to be found within the two camps—we chose the best, it is true, but so did they. And who conquered? I say once more. They are not more valiant then, but more crafty—or, rather, they are both wicked and crafty, for they know how to sow discord among us, and destroy us with our own weapons.

"But what wicked fury, what terrible infliction is this? What demon from hell infuses his venom into our hearts, and excites dissension and strife among us? Among *us*, brethren! Among *us*, of one blood, one tongue, one family! One or another of our cities, either with arms or stratagems, is constantly trying, in every way, to injure or ruin us, and, if they succeed, they bless themselves, and think they have done a fine thing, and when we cannot actually hurt one another, for fear we should lose the desire to do so, and to keep alive our mutual hatred, we offend each other with *words*, with abusive epithets, we call the Pisani *traitors*, the Florentines *blind*, the Saneſe *fools*, and so on. And this is not only the case between city and city, state and state, but every little town, every hamlet, every villa, is ready to injure its neighbor, to offend, abuse, and, at last, hate, if it can do no more."

And, extending his hands, and pointing to the city beneath them, he continued:

"And here is an example in point. Florence, the free, the rich, the happy; the honor, the glory of Italy; mother of so much wisdom, intelligence, virtue, and of all the beautiful in art. This bastard Pope says, one day, 'Florence must be mine,' and the first thing, as usual, is, to call in these *Spaniards*, these *thieves*, to aid him. You may think, if they waited to hear that a second time. You may imagine how they ran. It was proposed to sack Florence. And what did the other cities do in the meantime? Venice made her *brave* peace with the Emperor, and renounced her promises, and looked on. Siena even sent artillery, to help in ruining her neighbor."

And, looking at a long culverin, close beside him, he kicked it with a gesture of rage and contempt, and cried out:

"And these pieces of artillery, I wish I could, with my foot, reduce them to powder. Are they not those of the Saneſe? Are they not Italian arms? and you, you, my comrades; let me tell you—Perdio—and be not angry—are you not all Italians? And

have not *you* aided in the ruin of this most beautiful country? And what profit have you derived from it, now that you see it at your feet, enslaved, impoverished and degraded? Unnumbered hardships, unnumbered wounds, and that miserable, niggardly pay, if, indeed, you ever receive it. And to whom fall the treasures and the power? To these *thieves*, who hold us in unmeasured contempt, and call us *traitors* and *cowards*; and, if, instead of aiding them, you had aided your brethren, think you your gain would have been less?

“And how many are there of the enemy, with whom we are to fight? Are they a million of men, ten against one of us? They are a few thousands. And are not *you* here? Do not the Italian bands compose nearly half the camp? and, if those within the walls unite with you, will there not be enough to exterminate these low-born assassins? For this purpose, I, and my companions, and Fanfulla here, who is an honor to our profession, are come hither to offer to fight *with* you, and, when we shall have settled this disturbance, we will issue from our gates and attack the enemy, front and flank, and thus we will deliver the land from these robbers.

“Now, in the name of God, whoever has a soul within him, whoever will do as I propose, let him raise his hand, and him who will not, we will do without. Long live the Italian bands! Long live Florence!”

Lamberto, in uttering this cry, unsheathed his sword, and, raising it above his head, made it flash in many a rapid whirl, and, in the whole crowd, who remained standing, and who, until then, had been like a mosaic-work of faces, nothing was seen but waving hands, and brandished swords, pikes, or arquebuses, and, at the same time, they raised a ferocious cry of “Long live Italy! Death to the Spaniards!” The acquiescence of these men, manifesting itself so promptly and explicitly, Lamberto leaped joyfully from the barricade, and, with his brothers-in-law, Fanfulla, and all those who had left Florence with him, went to raise their standard, and form their company around it, in order of battle, while the captains and other officers hastened to collect and dispose their men, who, with great celerity, and without disorder, (like veteran soldiers,) assembled, each around his own standard.

But what was Vitelli, the leader of these people, doing in the meantime? What did Don Ferrante Gonzaga, the Captain of the army, do, on seeing this movement, and hearing this uproar, indicating evidently a sedition, and, perhaps, an open rebellion?

He did, just as the keepers of the herds of half-tamed horses

and colts, of the *campagne di Roma*, do, in similar circumstances, who can drive and manage them well enough, in ordinary cases, but when, sometimes, whatever the cause may be, the spirit of mischief enters into these beasts, they are suddenly thrown into disorder, running and chafing, and with nostrils dilated and tails erect, begin to attack one another with teeth and hoofs, with a thousand strange antics and capers; the keeper at such times tries, with his voice and his gestures, to restore a little order, always, however, looking about him, and keeping at a prudent distance from the mischief, and, when he sees that all is in vain, he stands still, and looks on and waits for the end.

Just so, did Don Ferrante, and, to the captains of that time, it often happened, that they attempted to command, but were commanded, much to the sorrow of the poor people in whose country they were fighting, upon whom then fell, in addition to the ordinary and indispensable evils of war, unnumbered casual grievances, occasioned by the unbridled, undisciplined state of the soldiery.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THERE had been already two hours of day, before the bands of Vitelli, (with whom had fraternized all the other Italians in the camp,) were ready to put themselves in motion to attack the Spaniards.

The sky, swept by the storm of the preceding night, was of a clear, transparent hue, which, towards the horizon, took a gilded, vapory tint, where floated long streaks of clouds, lightly poised on the crests of the mountains, over whose sides the shadows, thrown by the clouds, extended themselves in dark-blue spots, while, those parts struck by the rays of the sun, were clothed in the warm, varied colors, by which the fields are tinged, towards the close of summer. The whole atmosphere was like a sea of the purest white light, so that the most distant and minute objects could be clearly discerned, and the Italians, assembled at Giramonte, were distinctly seen from all points of the camp, the soldiers of which, running to the elevated spots, the intrenchments, and every prominence of the hill, were looking on, watching this movement, like spectators at a fête, full of curiosity, and delighted with the anticipation of some great exploit.

On the esplanade of the Torre del Gallo, which, at a short distance, commands Giramonte, were Don Ferrante Gonzaga, Alessandro Vitelli, the Count Pier Maria, and many of the principal characters in the army, considering, with anything but pleasure, the serious nature of this insurrection, appearing as much non-plussed and astonished, as the cattle drover, to whom we have lately compared Don Ferrante. They saw how the thing had begun, but they could not foresee how it would end; they knew it was with soldiers, as with colts, (here also the similitude holds,) let *one* begin to play the mad-cap, and, by his example, he sets agog a hundred others.

On the other hand, the Spanish troops, encamped below Belosguardo and Mt. Uliveto, aware of the danger which awaited them, were hastily arming, and putting themselves in order, although exceedingly reluctant to engage against the Italians,

not through lack of courage, for they were bold and good soldiers, but because, instead of quarrelling among themselves, they preferred to remain united, and enter Florence by force, and pillage the city.

Unwilling to renounce the hope of this so much desired plunder, they decided to send two of their captains to Don Ferrante, praying him to interpose, and authorizing him to make those concessions, which, leaving their honor unscathed, might be necessary to pacify the Italians and cancel all past injuries. The two set off on their errand, and, arriving at the Torre del Gallo, made known their embassy to the Captain. He listened to them with ill-humor, with his arms crossed on his breast, and at last said angrily :

"How do you think I can make those devils listen to reason? Fine times, by my faith! Listen!"

And, indeed, just at that very moment, the air was filled with the cries of the soldiers, the shouts of the captains, setting the troops in motion, the noisy and rapid beat of the drums, and the shrill screams of the fife. These deep, dense battalions, for they did not then have the light troops of the present day, all bristling and glittering with pikes and halberds, resembling the inverted comb of a wool-carder, were then seen to give those first heaving motions, observed in a squadron, when first putting itself in motion, and the hollow, regular tramp of so many feet met the ear, and, indeed, the whole aspect of these soldiers, was such as to give little hope that they would be checked or turned at will, by mere words.

The battalions, in the meantime, were descending the hill, now, with closed ranks and solid front, and now, swerving and breaking its uniformity a little, and then, immediately forming again, according to the disposition of the land, but always in good order. In front, and at the flanks of the main body of halberdiers, of which they were composed, came, in ranks less compact, a goodly number of arquebusiers, supporting in the left hand, the butt ends of their arms, which rested upon their shoulders, and bearing in their left, the *musket-rest* and the *lighted cord*; some of the soldiers, instead of arquebuses, bore, point upwards, the huge two-handed swords, which now, suspended by way of ornament in our saloons, call forth the exclamation from one who sees them for the first time, "What sinewy arms our ancestors must have had!" The captains and sergeants, marching boldly in front, with swords drawn, and bearing shields all inlaid and set in gold, with a fringe around their outer edge, and a sharp point in the centre, wore corselet and greaves of iron, below which, their breeches de-

scended, in broad folds, to the knee, gathered up and confined there by bands of cloth, while the legs, covered with a tightly-fitting stocking, showed muscles which would hardly fail them under any exertion. We say nothing of the bronzed, fierce, and truly martial faces; of the beards, mustachios and whiskers, which left visible nothing but eyes and nose; nor of the swaggering airs, which belonged to the soldiers of this time, because, to give an idea of such minute particulars, as well as the mode of manœuvring, in the armies of these times, the pencil is far better than the pen, and a glance at the pictures of Vasari in the Palazzo Vecchio, or at some of the carvings of the sixteenth century, will illustrate them much more clearly than any description.

While these soldiers were moving on thus boldly to the assault, it hardly seemed to Don Ferrante, to comport with his honor, to suffer such a disorderly state of things, without lifting a finger to prevent it, and, not caring to compromise his authority, although he knew it was not much superior to that of the army itself, he leaped upon his mule, and, followed by Vitelli, and a few of the officers, descended to meet the mutineers. Arrived near them, he raised his hand, motioning for the drums to be silent, and evidently desirous to speak, but the soldiers paying no attention to him, but marching on, merely bestowing upon him a contemptuous glance, as did their leaders also, he raised his voice, trying to out-scream their noise. A few words, a few unintelligible syllables only, survived the general shipwreck of his whole address. But, on the contrary, *he* could distinctly hear the many abusive words hurled at *him* from the midst of the ranks, from lungs that knew how to say them with advantage, amid the drums and the fifes, and one rough voice was heard to bellow above the others, "Be-gone! begone! and eat your frogs!" alluding to the abundance of those animals in the pools of Mantua, the home of Don Ferrante. At length, seeing that he effected nothing, *he* abandoned the desperate undertaking, and turning his mule with an air of vexation, he returned whence he came, not without a rather uncourteous accompaniment of howls, murmurs and hisses. The troops, having reached the plain of Baroncelli, the spot where now rises the royal villa of Poggio Imperiale, descending which, at a short distance, they would come in sight of the Spaniards who were prepared to receive them, halted a moment, to bring up their ranks.

In one of the first files, were Averardo and Vieri, armed with long partizans, and at their side, came with the arquebuses Lamberto, Fanfulla and Bindo.

While each one was examining and getting ready his arms, one buckling a strap tighter, and another securing his morion, some blowing their lighted cords, to keep them from being extinguished, and the captains, reviewing the ranks and changing the place now of this one, now of that, arranging their men with reference to the size and strength of each one, Lamberto was observing the Spaniards drawn up in order of battle, in the little valley on the other side of the Strada Romana, by which it is divided lengthwise. He could see these serried squadrons of men; of middle stature, it is true, but robust, sun-browned, grown old in war, and the best foot-troops then in Europe; and, foreseeing how terrible must be the encounter, he felt the greatest apprehension for Bindo, who stood before all the rest, without any shelter, and impatient as a race-horse at the starting-place, was burning for the attack to begin. Could he be induced to retire into the ranks? The thing was not to be thought of. Lamberto gave a glance at Fanfulla, and, without speaking, for fear of being overheard by the youth, he expressed so clearly by his face and gesture the idea, "We must stand by and defend him," that Fanfulla understood him perfectly, and nodded his head two or three times in the affirmative, with an expression that said much more than words.

Lamberto, satisfied, turned to the soldiers, who, by tacit consent, after hearing his spirited harangue, regarded him in this faction, almost in the light of captain, and, raising his voice in order to be heard by as many as possible, he said, with a face lighted up by a proud and noble expression of gladness:

"Well, brothers, here we are! Here we are, to fight, this time, not for those who pay, and, at the same time, despise us, but for *ourselves*, for *our nation*; to decide whether the Italians truly deserve to be the prey of all nations, the laughing-stock and the jest of the whole world! Blessed be God that it once more falls to my lot to fight against soldiers among whom I do not see a single Italian face! Now, I will say no more. Florence is looking at us; the whole camp, the flower of the brave men of Europe, are looking at us. Let him who repents, begone while there is time, and let him who loves his country, honor, and glory, follow me, and, if I fall back, kill me on the spot!"

The drums beat the march, and, at the cry "Long live Italy!" which then burst forth, and was repeated a thousand times, the troops moved forward, all together, and descending swiftly with pikes levelled, arrived at the bottom of the hill, and,

crossing the street, threw themselves upon the Spaniards, who, unmoved, and responding "Long live Spain!" and arms also lowered, awaited them; with streaming banners of yellow and vermillion, the sound of drums, fifes and other military instruments filling the air, and answered by the echo, and the distant shouts of the whole camp.

But already, before these two hostile forces came in collision, a hail-storm had commenced from the arquebusiers, who were seen to lower the arquebus swiftly on their rests, and fire, and then resume their march, loading on the way; and these squadrons, but a little before, so brilliant, and so plainly discerned, began to be here and there, veiled and hidden by clouds of smoke, which, appearing suddenly, wrapped them in their dense, white folds, and then passed off, thinned and dispersed by the wind.

But, when the first file of the Italian bands, with its own impetus, and that given it from behind, from the depth of the battalions, came in conflict with the Spanish soldiers, there arose a new and louder din, to which the clash of arms was now added, resembling the hollow, sonorous roar of the sea, when it breaks on a distant ledge of rocks, or, rather, the tremendous crash of two huge men-of-war, when dashed together by the tempest.

Among those, who, from the heights above, were witnessing this terrible spectacle, all at once, every shout ceased, every voice was hushed, all watching intently these two masses of men, fighting and pressing so closely upon one another, that they at length formed but one body. They saw them waver, now losing, now regaining ground, now swaying forwards, now backwards, that forest of pikes, in the midst of which, following its motions, amid the flash of weapons, fluttered pennons, standards and plumes, of many varied colors. They saw in the midst, where the combat was closest and most furious, the confused and flickering flash of arms, which, in rapid motion, reflected in numerous ways, the rays of the sun. They saw, from time to time, openings made in this dense mass, by the sudden fall of dead or wounded, but which were immediately filled, for the survivors, trampling under foot the fallen, without regard to friends or foes, occupied their places, often, only to fall themselves the next moment.

When the smoke, rising more densely in some parts, spread its shadow over the combatants, the fire from the arquebuses showed itself in a dense, glittering shower of fiery tongues, which grew pale or vanished, whenever this shade was pierced by the light of the sun.

Above the terrible discordant din produced by the incessant discharge of musketry, the rapid beating of drums, and the mutual blows, given and received, arose, from time to time, a terrible cry of victory, from that one of the two parties who had gained apparently some advantage over the other, and now the cry of "Italy!" now that of "Spain!" resounded through the air, and was received by the spectators with as many shouts, acclamations and clapping of hands, as the ancients made use of, when witnessing in the amphitheatre, the exploits of the gladiators.

But this spectacle, which, seen at a distance, appeared splendid, and had in itself a certain festal air, from the glitter of arms, the richness of colors and fringes, and the beauty of the sky which lighted it, was, upon a nearer view, unspeakably sad and terrible.

The blind fury of the fray took such possession of the combatants, that they suffered themselves to be thrust through and through by the halberds, rather than yield a foot of earth, so that it was happier for the fallen to come to the ground dead than wounded, for it was their lot to find a most wretched bed, while breathing out their spirit in the last agonies, trodden under foot by their own comrades. And now were heard for nothing could be seen in the throng) howls of rage, oaths, groans, meaning cries, and sometimes a pious voice invoking God. The ground being somewhat sloping, the blood was running in rivulets here and there, forming pools in the low hollows; such had been the slaughter for more than an hour, and, as yet, it was impossible to foresee to whom would remain the honor of the day.

But it was not possible, that a battle so furious should remain long undecided: and the scale was now about to turn.

Our young men, who, together with Fanfulla, had fought among the foremost with what ardor and impetuosity may be imagined, and, fighting always close to the standard, weary and covered with sweat and blood, amid heaps of corpses, by reason of which they could ill manage their weapons or find a secure footing, for the ground, even in the open places, was nothing but slippery, bloody mire, they saw rise in front, amid the thickest of the foe, the great standard of the Spaniards, held upright by a standard-bearer, a man of terrible aspect, and, a rare thing among the Spaniards, of tall stature and colossal proportions.

Lamberto, seeing that the critical moment had arrived which was to decide the victory, and which always belongs to him who knows how to seize it, made a sign to Fanfulla, who

was disengaging his sword from the body of a Spaniard he had just struck down, muttering, "They have nine lives like a cat; and if we do not beat down their muzzle, there is no way that they will die!"

Lamberto, I say, cried to his men, "To the standard, brave men, down with that banner, and the day is ours!"

And, rushing all together, like lions, upon the place specified, he, the foremost, with that incredible celerity and bravery of his, before any of the enemy had it in their power to prevent it, thrust his sword into the body of the standard-bearer, and, following up his thrust with the handle of the sword, pushed him to the ground, and, with him, the standard, which, being very large and wide, unfurled by the wind, covered many soldiers, who, unable to see, were prevented from manœuvring or using their weapons, and, while seeking to release themselves from this incumbrance, were thrown somewhat into confusion, just, as in a shipwreck, the masts, falling with sails all entangled, impede the movements of the crew.

Our men lost not a moment, but, rushing upon them, some with daggers and others with knives, managed so that few of these Spaniards could liberate themselves, and almost all fell in a heap, one upon another, pierced by a thousand wounds. A little space was opened, and Lamberto, seizing the standard, inverted it, and, fixing in the ground the gilded point which adorned the top, grasped the arm of Bindo, who was about to throw himself upon the enemy, who were now rushing in from every direction, saying to him:

"Hold fast this standard, for, by everything sacred, we have conquered!"

The good Lamberto knew, that around this standard would ensue the last and most terrible struggle, and, in giving the boy the honor of holding it, he could, under this pretext, place him in the centre of their own men, and in the least exposed part of the battle.

And, indeed, the Spaniards, seeing their banner on the ground, rushed from all sides to this spot, but the Italians also, equally pressed thither, with the loud, joyous shout of "Victory!" and a living rampart was thus formed around Bindo so close and dense, that it was impossible to make any use of sword or spear, but the close dagger-thrust, impelled by deadly hate and gigantic effort, pierced its victims through and through; in the fierce struggle, shield elashed against shield, cuirasse against cuirasse, gauntlet against gauntlet, every one felt upon his cheek the hot, quick breath of his adversary, life and death depending upon being the first to find a passage

for the dagger aimed blindly, and at random; whence it often happened, that when two combatants, who, with clenched teeth, and heated and angry faces, were seeking thus to send home the deadly blow, all at once, the light from the face of one would become extinguished, and be succeeded by a ghastly pallor, the eyes rolled in their sockets, the head fell back, while the corpse, imprisoned in the dense crowd, sometimes remained a full minute before it came to the ground.

But when the forces, the impetuosity, the *acharnement* of the combatants are exactly equal, a very little thing often suffices to decide the victory. This fallen banner produced the greatest and most instantaneous effect upon the soldiers who were fighting at a distance, annihilating the courage of the Spaniards, and marvellously increasing that of the Italians, who were still further stimulated by the incessant cry of "Vittoria! Vittoria!" from the spot where, in the struggle for the Spanish banner, was now concentrated all the importance of the conflict. There were witnessed the most stupendous exertions, as great in the defence of the banner, as in the effort to recover it, and when, from the fury of the onslaught, the press was diminished by the fall of the dead and dying, and the soldiers could rally a little and avail themselves of their weapons, a Spaniard was seen leaping across the heaps of fallen bodies, and reaching the standard, he strove to grasp it, but Bindo, making use of his sword with the hand that was free, pierced him through, and he fell dead at his feet. He was followed by another and another, who, throwing themselves upon the flag-staff, made incredible efforts to wrest it from Bindo and those of our men who had come to his assistance; each party obstinately contesting for the prize, now falling, now recovering themselves, chafing and panting with their gigantic exertions, until Averardo, who was fighting at a little distance, seeing the peril of his brother and comrades, rushed thither, raising high above his head an enormous two-handed sword, which, falling with a whizzing sound upon the most obstinate of the Spaniards, cleft skull and brains. Averardo crying fiercely, "Take home with you *that* booty from the sacking of Florence, miscreant!" and while uttering this cry, he had with incredible fury and dexterity killed another and wounded a third, and, continuing to wield his sword, which was heard rather than seen in the air, he exclaimed at every stroke, "To the sacking, to the sacking of Florence, brave men, for they are waiting in Spain to hear the news!"

In short, the standard, though its staff was broken, and it was trampled, torn, and soiled with blood and mire, still

remained in the hands of the Italians, who, exhilarated by this honor, and seeing also while they fought, that the spectators on the surrounding heights, raised their arms, and waved their handkerchiefs, as if applauding their cause, and observing, besides, troops issuing from the gates of Florence, which they supposed to be their own, coming to their aid according to agreement, they raised anew and more loudly, the cry of "Victory," and "Italy! Italy!" and so united, instantaneous, and powerful was the onset, that the enemy first gave signs of disorder, and the courage and the efforts of the Italians, constantly increasing, the Spaniards evidently began to waver, though they still maintained their ground, and defended themselves in such a way that they could not be said to be routed.

"There they are! there they are!" cried our young men, and the leaders of the Italian troops shouted, pointing to the soldiers issuing from the gate San Friano, "There come our men!"

The courage, the impetuosity, the hot pursuit was thus increased, in some, from the certainty of succor, in others, from unwillingness to permit those who were coming to their aid, to divide with them the honor of the victory; the Spaniards continuing to yield and fall back, some, even beginning to disband and flee openly, closely pursued by their adversaries, now exhilarated with savage joy, and the army changing ground by this movement, exposed to view the post they had occupied, covered with more than five hundred corpses.

And why delayed these bands which have just issued from the city? Because, instead of having come, as the combatants supposed, to unite with them, they were sent by Malatesta, (who had composed them of Corsicans and his own Perugians, strictly faithful to him,) merely to see how the thing would end, and to keep in check those soldiers in Florence who might have designs of rousing the inhabitants to arms, and go forth in aid of their nation. Such was the result of the note written by Troilo in San Marco.

Indeed, even without this reinforcement, victory had decided for the Italians. But it was written in heaven, that on this occasion also, the blood of so many honorable and generous Italians should flow in torrents, and to no purpose.

The German infantry, which amounted to several thousand men, excellent soldiers, veterans in war, considering this contest as a private strife 'twixt nation and nation, on a point of honor, had promised not to interfere or take sides with either party, and remained in arms ready, indeed, but idle spectators of the combat, in their barracks.

When Don Ferrante saw, that the Italians were in the ascen-

dency, and how boldly they were disposed to follow up their advantage, he feared they would succeed in utterly routing and destroying their enemies; and although he was not actually informed of the plan arranged by the Piagnoni to rouse the soldiers shut up in Florence, in aid of their compatriots of the camp, he suspected that such would naturally be the case, and he saw the great risk which must ensue to the Imperial camp and cause, conducted, until now, to such favorable results.

He went immediately to the German quarters, and finding Tanusio, their captain, he told him, (pretending to know for a certainty what he only surmised, that there were Italians within and without the walls, who had agreed to fall upon all foreigners engaged in this war; that they had commenced with the Spaniards, and that if the Germans allowed the Italians time to defeat the Spaniards, they would then attack them; that they had better look to their own safety, and not say afterwards, that they had not been warned. And as he spoke, he showed Tanusio the troops coming out of Florence, adding:

"There they come — with what purpose, God knows — and very soon you will know too."

The arts of Don Ferrante, as he supposed would be the case, had the most complete effect, and a few moments after, twelve companies of German foot, with their captain at their head, descended with closed ranks and quick march, menacing the rear of the Italians, now weary, diminished in numbers, and not in the best order, from the long contest and the feeling of security which belongs to the victorious.

Fanfulla, who, in his own words, on the previous night in San Marco, when describing the qualities of the old soldier, "always had one eye on the cat, and the other on the frying pan," was the first to perceive this movement, and notified his comrades, who, sorely puzzled, were unable to guess the design of the Germans. But, several shots discharged by them, by which some among the Italians were wounded, soon removed all doubt, and the poor Italians, sacrificed and taken in the midst, cried out, "Upon the traitors! treachery!" but, at the same time, they were forced to think of means of escape from a place where, attacked on every side, it was no longer possible to effect anything.

With a movement to the right, in good order, and vigorously defending themselves from the Germans, and the Spaniards, who, on the arrival of aid so unexpected, had resumed the offensive, they proceeded towards the Arno, with the intention of fording it below Mont Oliveto, and fortifying themselves on the other shore, in the villas of Fiesole.

to ford the river and reach the bank.

If the soldiers who left Florence had been what our men expected, fall upon the rear of the Germans might have re-established things, seeing them remain immovable, with to advance, Lamberto and his still fighting, they made signals to unfurl the standard, and crying at last, perceiving that Cencio Guas was at the head of these bands were, and resigned all hope.

The stream of the Arno, in the driers, some thrusting their pikes themselves against the force of the low, swift and foaming, and, in breasts, and even necks, so that and several were drowned, those could to assist them, the enemy them a constant fire from their

However, the greater number shore, and none now remained but who had made head against the of the river; and the immense numbers have certainly overpowered them they were, or had not the Spaniards themselves from the contest, to

At this moment, transfixed by a spear, poor Vieri fell dead, and Averardo, who, alone of the brothers, saw the deed, rushed furiously upon the slayer, but, struck at the moment by a ball, which broke his right leg, he fell on one knee near the corpse of his brother, a hand's breadth from the shore, which descended precipitously to the river. Seeing his vengeance thus thwarted, his face, already so ferocious, assumed so terrible an expression, with gnashing teeth and fire flashing from his eyes, that Vieri's destroyer remained as if fascinated, with his sword on high, without striking a blow, and Averardo, unable to reach him, flung his sword at him, the hilt of which striking him in the breast, made him reel. Quickly recovering himself, and observing the rich armor of the fallen man, he thought, that in taking him prisoner, he might command a rich ransom, and he advanced, supposing that, disarmed as he was, he could lay hands upon him without opposition. But hardly was he within reach, when Averardo, raising himself on his uninjured leg, flung his arms around him, and never bear hugged his enemy more closely, or planted his claws more firmly in his back, and thus clinging to him, and dragging him along with him, he suffered himself to fall with his prey into the river. The waters opened with the splash, and quickly closed over the falling bodies, and the banks there being steep and high, and the current strong, they were carried a long distance, before they re-appeared upon the surface, where, still locked in each other's grasp, they floated a moment, then disappeared forever.

Lamberto and Bindo seeing this, and observing Vieri extended on the ground, sent forth a maddened cry, and, driven to desperation, were about to fling themselves into the midst of their enemies, which would have proved their certain destruction; for, though by sheer miracle they had not yet received a wound of any importance, they were, nevertheless, slightly wounded in various parts of their bodies, and they began to feel their strength give way, after fighting so many hours in the heat of the day, and their armor was already burning hot with the rays of the sun; but Fanfulla, who never desponded, being used to such straits, and knowing that it was no time to avenge the dead, but rather to secure the safety of the living, contrived a plan to rescue the two survivors from this now desperate fray.

Seizing the moment, when the enemy, astounded at the ferocious act of Averardo, had slackened their fire, and stood watching the catastrophe of the drowning men, he said quickly to Lamberto, "Let us save Bindo, you go on one side of him, and I the other, and we will drag him across the Arno, if it be a possible thing."

To Lamberto, the light of whose intellect was obscured by grief for the ruin of his enterprise, and the death of the two brothers, came up all at once, the thought of Niccolò, of Laudomia; and the idea seemed too enormous, that this boy too should be sacrificed, and all to no purpose, and, no sooner said than done, he seized Bindo by one arm, while Fanfulla grasped the other, and thus, notwithstanding his struggles to free himself, they forced him to leap with them into the river.

It was time, for, left almost wholly alone, had they remained a moment longer, they must have yielded or been sacrificed.

The Italians, who, in the meantime, had regained the opposite shore, and were drawn up there, no sooner saw the three enter the river, and, therefore, below the line of their fire, than they began to discharge their arquebuses upon the enemy, and this causing them to retreat from the shore, gave our heroes an opportunity to regain the ranks in safety, where, having made a last discharge of all their arms, the troops moved forward quietly and in order, tambours beating and banners flying, so as not to have the appearance of flight, and leaving the Arno behind, they proceeded along the walls to the hills of Fiesole.

Arrived there, they established themselves in the most impregnable places, and the Spaniards and German foot, on their part, remained in arms and on the alert, fearing lest their enemies, having better ordered their designs, should renew the attack with better fortune; this timorousness of theirs, rendering them docile and obedient to their leaders, who, in due time, would lead them to afflict and be afflicted elsewhere; while the death of so many, who, living, would have demanded their pay, brought no small relief to the Apostolical Chamber, who were indebted for this discount upon the price of Florence, to the subtle cunning of Baccio Valori!

This worthy, from one of the towers of the *case de' Bini*, whither he had ascended with Troilo, Malatesta, and Il Nobili, had witnessed the whole engagement, and as he saw it terminate so exactly according to his wishes, he said, all joyous, rubbing his hands, and uttering an "Oh!" with long, free respiration, "Now it is ended in toto, — and we are masters of Florence!" Il Nobili, who, night and day, saw before him visions of Niccolò's chests filled with florins and ducats, then said, casting eager and impatient glances, now at Baccio, now at Troilo:

"Oh! for God's sake, make haste then, lest he escape us."

"And, lest Laudomia escape me, that blossom, that lily, that beauty of beauties," added Troilo, laughing, and thinking to himself, "and, if Selvaggia were here, she would say, lest that

Lamberto escape me. At any rate, there will be nothing to dispute about, for every one is satisfied with his own share of this booty."

The joy which Baccio felt, put him in such good humor, that he took Troilo playfully by one whisker, and, drawing him towards him, said, "*Uno ne fa e cento ne pensa, il ribaldone*.* Let's hear; what is this other foolery? You told me something, I know not what — it seems to me — but I had other thoughts in my head. Let's hear — well — already another love;" and then, pretending to frown, he said, as if in mockery, "are you not ashamed? You, who have a wife and child?"

"Messer Baccio," said Troilo, quietly withdrawing his whisker from the finger of Valori, "you see, things are now reversed, the people of Florence are now changed from a government composed of many, to that of one alone; I, on the contrary, pass from a state of one alone, to that of many. What would you have? It is the effect of the constellations, and you've reason to thank your stars that I had this to urge me on; if it had not been for the hope of solacing myself, at last, with this handsome girl, I assure you I would not have endured the tedium so long."

"Well, well, but tell us what it is."

"It is soon told: she pleases me, because she is handsome, and handsome women are made for handsome young men, if I mistake not. Until now, I have never had a chance to play the fool, with Niccolò and all his crew at my side. Do you want to know why? I knew very well it would be all labor lost. What do you think? One day, I just ventured to make love a little to her, just by way of a joke — no harm in the world — bless me! such a look as she gave me. 'These are not the manners of a Christian or a gentleman.' Patience, thought I, if this model does not please you, we will find another."

* He does one thing, and thinks a hundred, the consummate knave; that is, he has more words than deeds.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"AND what may this other mode be?" asked I took pleasure in the knavery of the other, and with the way with which he narrated it.

"It is this. But we must go back a little. From transactions, which have passed in the family, I have gathered that Niccolò intends to escape to Genoa, to Signor Antonio, passing through Pistoja and La Montagna, and sleeping at night at a farm, which he owns near San Marcello. On my advice, you will suffer him to set out, for, if you seize him in Florence, I could not promise you, that there would not be a serious riot among the populace. You ought to have seen how, last night, in San Marco, all those ragged fellows of his, offered to die for him. Let's allow him to go, and I will pretend to flee with him; it will be sufficient to give me five or six men-at arms, who shall follow at a distance, and, if these are accompanied by a certain number of men, who know who — it will not be amiss — enough, that shall be a safe business; but it will be proper to find some one to guide them, and who will be a safe man?"

"I will go myself!" exclaimed Nobili, who was being left out, in some way.

Troilo scanned him from head to foot, with a peculiar expression, then said, "Well, you shall see, yourself, and your fellows can boast of having had one captain, if they have not another. Then, when we are in the Montagna, with the Panciatica party, in case ours is not sufficient, we will quietly take them back to Florence, or, to say by the way, Messer Benedetto, shall bring Niccolò back here, and I will bring him up to the sheriff. I, when we get near Prato, will take the left hand with the young lady, and certain other company, and proceed to the villa of Messer Baccio, where I will pay my respects to his steward, and taste a cup of wine, and Messer Baccio will give me a letter, so that I may have occasion for a room, and throw myself on a bed, and, as for the rest, none can go out who have not the keys."

"Then I'm to hold the ladder for you, you scapegrace?"

"The other day, when Messer Beneletto here, was so intent upon Niccolò's florins, that he could hardly help crying for them, what did I say? That I was not bargaining for money, that I wanted something else — this is what I meant — and, for the rest, there is no harm in it whatever. I do, as the ancient Romans did, with the pretty Sabine girls, they could not get them for love, so they took them by force."

But it would be anything but gratifying to the reader, were we to repeat the whole conversation, which passed between these wretches, for he has already heard enough for the understanding of our story. Let us leave them to their dark machinations, and, since it did not please God that to all should belong the joy of victory, let us give a look to what is passing in the house of the Lapi, whither Niccolò had returned, and where he had already received the sad news of the rout of the Italian bands.

He had no sooner learned these tidings, brought by one, who, from the walls, had been an eyewitness of the fact, than he sent away his daughters, who, timid and weeping, stood around him, who reluctantly obeyed his positive and repeated command, and who still lingered outside the door, after he had closed it, listening, in fear and anxiety, and praying God to sustain the courage and fortitude of the miserable old man. On being left alone, he sank on his knees before the niche, and, his strength utterly failing him, he fell upon his face with his hands joined in prayer. It is useless to attempt to describe the state of this desolate soul, in which the light of its faith, now, at times, vacillating, seemed abandoned of God and man; uttering an agonizing groan, he turned, with his whole soul, to ask the intercession of the martyr, the teacher, the friend, who, he was sure, could listen to him from heaven.

"Oh! sainted father," he said, "thou lov'dst me on earth, why hast thou abandoned me? Oh! still preserve in me my faith, and take my life. Let me die, my God, for I can endure it no longer. It is not possible."

And he remained mute, motionless, completely broken down under the weight of a grief, which, being now so intense as to obscure and confuse the operations of his intellect, was, in a certain way, its own solace, for it deprived this afflicted soul, for a short time, of all consciousness; but, all at once, he shook off this lethargy, for he seemed to hear a superhuman voice saying to him, "Who is this, that would have his recompense before the sun sets? Who asks repose before the end of the day? Who has told thee, that thou art henceforth a w

instrument, that thy country can have no further need of thee? Thy ancestors, so many times exiled, did they not return? Who but a coward ever despairs of his country?"

He raised his head, still kneeling, at length he stood up, his state of mind completely changed, his proud nature, like a strong, well-tempered steel spring, which an immense weight may bend, but cannot break, rose up powerful and entire, and he said:

"Let us flee now from Florence, and let us go elsewhere and prepare better days for her. I shall not see them, I shall die in the land of exile — my sons will see them — if one of them yet remain to me — he shall see his country. And could I be such a pitiful wretch as to desire to die? After a life of ninety years, was the day to come when I thought more of myself than of my country?"

He heard at that moment the sound of steps in the next room; he supposed it to be his sons returned from the battle, and he thought, "Are they all there?" and, placing his hand on the lock, he opened it, and with a grave, composed countenance saluted the young men; then, perceiving that two were missing, he stopped a moment, overpowered by his feelings, then said: "Can anything be done for them, can we yet aid them?"

"They can aid us, for they are praying for us now in paradise."

Niccolò responded Amen! in a low voice; he turned his face away, and was silent for some minutes, during which, it was evident from the motion of his lips, that he was praying; at last he said: "I sorrow not, that they met death for their country; it was for this, that I brought them up; but I sorrow, that they met it in vain. But God has judged Florence, and her iniquities have been found too great. Come, children, the hour of exile has sounded for us. Let us remember how many times our ancestors have found themselves at this pass; let us imitate their fortitude, and the constancy with which, living years and years in exile, they knew how to take measures for their return, and for the triumph of liberty, and shall we prove ourselves less than they?"

"I have already spoken to you of my plan. We will go to Genoa, to Signor Andrea — to that man who could subdue a country, and yet leave it free and in the enjoyment of its rights. He will welcome those who suffer for liberty. Make all needful preparations; at nightfall we will depart from hence, I, never to return, you, if God pleases, to return in better times."

And, turning his eyes around upon the walls and the floor

ture of the room where he had dwelt more than fifty years, he said :

" Adieu, then, forever, my poor dwelling. I always believed that in this bed I should be able to die in peace, in the midst of my children ; that my bones would repose with those of my forefathers, in our family tomb in San Marco. God's will be done. Wherever they may lie, the sound of the trumpet at the last day will come even to them, and then I shall find a recompense for my present trials, if I shall have borne them virtuously."

During these remarks of Niccolò, the young men and Fanfulla had remained with sad and downcast faces. Laudomia, after having wept bitterly for the death of her brothers, had softly and in the ear of Lamberto, inquired if he was wounded, or in any way injured, and he, with a motion of the head so as not to interrupt the old man, and an affectionate glance, had reassured her. And Liza, immediately on the arrival of the young men, not seeing Troilo with them, had, in great terror, but in low tones, made inquiry of Fanfulla, who, in equally low voice and with brief words, tranquilized her with regard to his safety, telling her that he would surely arrive soon ; so that the two young women now devoted themselves to preparing for the journey, for which, as it wanted but a few hours of sunset, they had but very little time.

Fanfulla then narrated his meeting with the Frate in the morning, at the Porta S. Giorgio, as they were going out of Florence, and spoke of the price set upon Troilo's head, and he showed some uneasiness at not finding Troilo in the house, lest something had happened him, and the good Niccolò, entering also into his anxiety for the traitor, for he believed him to be such less than ever at this moment, became very unquiet and thoughtful, asking himself if he ought not to send in search of him ; but whom to send, and where ? for a turn through Florence was an ugly thing in these times, for those citizens who were known to be Plagnoni, and for the dubious good of one, ought he to risk the liberty and, perhaps, life of the remaining few ? But, to remove all these doubts and fears, Troilo at length appeared, coming from where he had been trafficking in the blood, the honor and the property of Niccolò, and concerting those last measures, which were to complete the extermination of this virtuous and unhappy family.

The villain, on coming hither, had endeavored, as much as possible, to clothe his face with an expression of grief and sadness, but a discerning eye, unprejudiced by his favor, would easily have detected, under the hypocritical mask, the wicked

and ill repressed joy that, from time to time, gleamed from his eyes; for, believing himself on the point of laying his hand on fortune's mane, he already feasted in anticipation upon the thought of the honors, the treasures, the varied delights with which his future life was to be filled, the commencement of which was to be the acquisition of that pure, beautiful creature, for whom he had long pined in fruitless desires.

He was received with an embrace from Niccolò, which he had the heart to receive and reciprocate. Aware, then, that he would be expected to give some explanation of the manner in which he had passed the day, he said, fabricating plenty of lies, that he had been laboring to raise the troops of the city; he told of the exertions he had made, and the impediments he found at last through the measures taken by Malatesta to keep the Florentine militia in check, and, at length, greatly lamenting and deploring the common misfortune, he added, that he had come to live or die with Niccolò and his family, and to do all that yet remained for him.

The good old man, who, from the story of the price set upon his head, deemed him a martyr for liberty, and, more exposed to peril than any of them, told him that at night he should leave Florence in their midst, that they would defend him against any who should attempt to injure him, to the last moment of life, and, embracing him, and calling him son, and striving to raise his apparently drooping spirits, he dismissed him with the others, that they might all be ready and in their saddles at the appointed hour.

While, in the different parts of the house, diligent preparations were being made for the sad journey, we will attempt to penetrate the hearts of each, and discover, if possible, the secret thoughts, and describe the anguish of those last hours, which preceded the departure.

Niccolò, on being left alone, seated himself, to recover his spirits and repose for a moment; then, rising to his feet with a resolute effort, he thought, first of all, how he should carry away with him the relics of Savonarola. Mounting, not without difficulty, upon a chair, he took down the monk's habit and the rich purse containing the ashes of the Frate, and placed them, not without tears, in a small box, saying to himself, "These, at least, I may have with me where I die." He then opened his book of records, which, being a very large volume, he thought to leave, together with much other household property, and wrote in it the following words:

"I record that this — day of August, 1530, I, Niccolò, the son of Messer Cione, at the age of ninety years, am forced"

leave my house and the city of Florence, now in possession of the Palleschi, and his Holiness Pope Clement VII., the enemies of this people, who have defended themselves to the last, justly and virtuously, and, having lost their liberty, they at least commend their fame to honest men, *que semper vivat*. And the Lord our God have mercy upon our sins. Amen."

He then collected many papers and letters, which, being found under the new administration, would have implicated more than one citizen, made a heap of them in the chimney, set fire to them, and while the flames were consuming them, he thought, "In a few moments, thy hearth-fires, Niccolò, will be extinguished forever!" And those who know the almost religious feeling, which the fireside of the paternal dwelling awakes in the soul, may readily imagine the feelings of the poor old man at this trying moment.

Leaving the chimney, and approaching the bed, he took from one of the posts, a silver crucifix, which he kissed, and hung it by the large cord to which it was attached, around his neck. He himself had placed it between the rigid hands of his dying wife; he had taken it from them before she was carried to her burial, and it now reminded him of that woman, who, strong-minded and yet humble, prudent, and, at the same, time ingenuous and innocent, had been the joy of his youth, the honor and comfort of his old age; of her, who had passed so many years with him, unknown, so to say, to the whole world, except his heart alone, which, though bold and intrepid, was not hard and ungrateful; and, in taking now this last memorial of his wife, he was moved by a thousand early remembrances, which he himself had believed were cancelled forever.

"Oh! how many trials God spared thee in calling thee to Himself before these times of misfortune—the death of so many sons—the ruin of Florence—the disaster of Liza—and now the exile—the flight—the hardships—the death in a strange land. Oh God! Thou *most* merciful! I wept then—I bewailed myself—Thou knewest what was best for me!—Now I thank thee, Lord, I suffer only for myself alone!"

Then, arranging various small articles for his personal use, and putting them into a small portmanteau, he took from a chest a small sum, which he kept there for unexpected emergencies, and which was the only treasure in coin that he possessed, for the story of the chests full of gold, was only one of the notions current with the populace in every country, and at all times, with regard to persons considered rich. Richard of *Niccolò* might call himself, but no wise man would be so stupid as to keep *useless* coin. He kept it circulating through the banks of Venice,

Lyons, Genoa, and the principal cities of Europe, so that, in his exile, he need not, at any rate, fear poverty.

Having finished all his preparations, he sat down to rest, but raising his head, he perceived that the lamp hanging before the niche, now naked and empty, was still burning. He rose and extinguished it, and this act, in appearance so trifling, was a new and most poignant affliction to the poor old man, who, for thirty-two years from the death of Savonarola, had always maintained this light, was accustomed to behold it night and day, to turn to it his eyes when engaged in prayer, and during the long and solitary vigils, in which, from the wakefulness of old age, he often passed whole nights — and now his chamber, deprived of this customary light, seemed to him like a thing without soul, strange, dead and desolate: bitter thoughts arose in his mind, of his murdered sons, who had been so often with him in this place, which now seemed to him so full of gloom, that he could not bear to remain there, and he felt a hurried and indescribable impulse to quit the place, and tear himself at once from so many painful memories.

And indeed, of all this family, Niccolò was the most unhappy, for, in the coming future, he had not one hope on which he could repose.

Laudomia, on her part, busied herself in her little room, assisted by Mona Fede, with tearful eyes indeed, and heart deeply afflicted by the thoughts of her brothers' death, the woes of her country, and the distress of her father, seeing herself thus suddenly flung among unknown and distant strangers, far from that roof to which was conjoined the thoughts, joys and affections of her whole life — but there was Lamberto, who would now be ever at her side, away from all these perils, and would he not be a sufficient compensation, a refuge, a hope? And so long as hope remains, who is wholly unhappy?

At the same time, in the heart of poor Liza, there was one hope which sustained her against the present misfortune. She hoped, unhappy one! to recover the love of her husband, (for the suspicion, the almost certainty of having lost it, was secretly and surely wasting her very soul,) when she should be alone with him in a distant land, away from the companions and friends, who, she believed, had estranged him from her; and, when passing her days in peace and tranquillity, far from so many perils and disturbances, she thought her health would return, and she should be as beautiful and fresh as she once was; she found in her fertile fancy a thousand dreams of felicity; she imagined to herself, her husband, welcomed at the festive board, greatly admired for his manners, and his beauty of person, returning

her, as at first, all loving and trustful, enjoying thus a double triumph, for the poor girl had no head or heart but for Troilo, and day after day she was pining for love of this remorseless villain.

In the meantime, the sun had set, and from Santa Maria Maggiore sounded the Ave Maria of the evening. Mona Fedo entered Niccolò's room bearing a lighted candle, and, as is customary with the servants in Italy, when at night-fall they bring lights to their masters, she said, from mere habit, "*felice notte*," happy night, without considering that, at that moment, such words were but mockery. The old man smiled sadly, and just then, the young men and the two daughters quietly entered, accompanied by Fanfulla, who protested that he would not abandon them until they were in safety.

Lamberto then said, that everything was in readiness for their departure, which he advised should be as speedy as possible, to avoid the danger of being stopped at the gate, from which, an hour after night-fall, it was extremely difficult to get permission to pass out. Two mules were ready at the great gate, the baggage was being placed upon them, and Lamberto's servant now entered, accompanied by the maid, to take and carry out that belonging to Niccolò.

Of course, the preparations for this departure could not be made so secretly, that the neighbors should not hear of it, and the news had already spread among the lower class, which comprised a large number of operatives in Niccolò's employ, not a few of whom had offered to risk their lives for him the night before in San Marco, and who began to collect in little knots, talking among themselves, mindful of their promise to defend him, and encouraging each other to unite for his protection, when he should appear in the public street at a time of so much peril.

These poor men soon decided to do so, and sent Bozza to the house of the Lapi, to inquire particularly by what gate Niccolò would leave Florence, and learning from one of the horsemen, that he would go by the way of Pistoja, they divided themselves into two companies, and many of them went out of the city, one at a time, however, fixing the rendezvous in a field away from a high road, near San Donato, and the others scattered themselves around the house, through the Via dei Conti, on the corner of the Carneseccchio, and on the Piazzetta, to be ready to resist any one who should venture to disturb or impede Niccolò's departure.

Troilo, from one of the windows, saw this assemblage of people, and said within himself: "Was I not right in thinking it

would be an ugly business to attempt to take this man prisoner in Florence?"

Finally, the hour had come, the horses were ready, the baggage having been already sent forward, and in these last moments, while the assembled family stood sobbing and silent, through the upper stories of the house, resounded the sharp and interrupted sound of the locking of doors, the drawing of bolts, the turning of hinges, the noise increasing and drawing nearer as Mona Fede descended, closing every shutter, and looking round to see that nothing was out of order, and no entrance left for thieves, and thinking even of the water which might leak in, in case of a storm, and saying, half crying: "So much trouble and so much labor! And God knows what hands our poor house will fall into! Other than thieves, I'm afraid! Oh! the most holy Madonna, help us."

And so, having ended all these arrangements, she came into Niccolò's room, and stood leaning against the door post, as if to signify that she had now thought of everything, and that she was ready, without being willing to say so expressly, for she, herself, had not the heart to give the signal, so to say, of departure.

The old man, appearing to be agitated by some new anxiety, said, at last, that he had sent a letter by one of the stable-boys to Fra Zaccaria, in San Marco, to offer him the opportunity of leaving Florence in his escort, and requesting him to propose to Fojano, the same means of escape, for both, in consequence of their sermons, preached during the siege in favor of defence, were now in the greatest possible peril.

"I cannot resolve to depart, without knowing whether we can aid these honest Frati.

Fanfulla, without opposing this generous feeling, showed, however, in his face, and in a certain restless motion of his body, that he did not approve of farther delay at this moment, and Lamberto, who was of the same mind, proposed that Fanfulla should go in the meantime to the gate, and speak to the Captain, to dissuade him from putting any impediment in the way of their departure, and Niccolò gave him fifty ducats, the better to secure the success of his embassy.

Shortly after the departure of Fanfulla, came the answer from San Marco. Fra Bendetto wrote that the two brethren were already in safety, (he so believed, but Fojano had been seized, when leaving Florence in disguise,) and he prayed that God would safely conduct Niccolò and all belonging to him.

Niccolò, then breathing more freely, said, rising with an alacrity, which was evidently not natural, "Now then, let us

go. And God, who sees our cause, He it is, who will aid us. My children," he said, stopping suddenly, "you will one day return to this house, to this room, without me; then remember Niccolò and his advice. If you shall ever possess any authority in Florence, trust not to the great, nor to mercenary captains nor soldiers, for by reason of them, we have now lost our country." And casting around a last glance, he added with a tone and aspect that seemed tranquil, "Let us go."

Thus at last all set forward, the men silent and thoughtful, the women weeping, and from the hall door they issued into the street, and one after another mounting their horses, proceeded in this order: Niccolò preceded, placed in the middle between Bindo and Fanfulla, Lamberto followed at the side of Landomia, then Troilo with Liza, her infant in her arms, and at last, came Maurice and Mona Fede.

While Niccolò, not without difficulty, was mounting his horse, great numbers of the populace, who had surrounded his house, thronged around him, some holding his stirrup, others supporting and aiding him to mount, some with their arms embracing his knees, and some kissing his feet, with words full of affection and veneration, blessing and encouraging him, and Bozza, resting one hand on his horse's crupper, said, "Never fear, Messer Niccolò, we are here, and you shall escape, in spite of knaves and traitors."

And the old man responding, with gestures and kind words to these demonstrations, they set off, and arriving at the Porta al Prato, they found that Fanfulla had obtained a free pass for them with little difficulty, and they passed out the gate without obstacle, accompanied by many of the workmen, who thanked God that they met with no impediment there, little knowing that this facility was given by express order of Raccio, who was shrewd enough, on this occasion, to take up with the advice of Troilo.

When issuing from the gate, they took the road to Prato; the sky was already sown with stars, and only in the east, behind the dark, serrated mass of mountains, gleamed a streak of bright orange, on which rested long, black clouds, slightly tinged on their extreme and lower edges, with a faint reddish hue.

The sad retinue, partly on horseback, and partly on foot, moved on without a word, or other sound than the heavy tread of human feet, or the tramp of the horses; the aspect of the country, desky and tranquil, shed upon the heart a sweet calm; at the same time, sad, peacefulness; the hoarse and tremulous *singing of the crickets* came with a certain regular intermission *upon the ear, together with the many and diverse sounds of*

the innumerable tribes of insects, which, without disturbing, give life to the silence of the night. The placid quiet of nature contrasted but too powerfully with the painful and agitated feelings of these poor afflicted ones. And who, smitten by misfortune, finding himself accidentally in a pleasant spot, witnessing a lovely dawn, a glorious sunset, a serene night, has not experienced a sense of bitterness, almost as if insult had been added to his misery? Perhaps, because the ordained and perennial stability of nature, contrasted with the continued change of our condition, tends to humble us, and make us painfully conscious of our own littleness.

After riding some distance, they reached a small eminence, from whence could yet be discerned the edifices and towers of Florence; Niccolò here drew rein, and, turning round, and nearly closing his eyes, saw, or thought he saw, for the last time, the dark mass of the Duomo. He stretched out his arms towards it, as if to embrace it, gave a deep sigh, and without opening his mouth, without any of his people daring to speak to him, he spurred on his horse, and resumed his way.

The company that was awaiting them at San Donato, had, in the meantime, silently united with them, and these poor *popolani*, esteeming themselves happy to be able to defend and conduct in safety their worthy benefactor, marched at a quick pace, without regarding weariness or danger, until, after four hours' journey, they reached Prato. Passing around the walls, and entering the road to Pistoja, Niccolò was disposed to stop and give those who had walked so far, an opportunity to rest, but they would not suffer him to do so, and surrounding his horse, in great numbers, entreated him to resume his journey, (for every delay might be perilous,) declaring that they were not in the least tired, and, in fact, they were not men to be easily overcome by fatigue.

Thus journeying all night, they found themselves, a little before daybreak, at the gate of Pistoja, and here, both men and beasts, absolutely required food and repose. Taking the right hand through certain bye-paths, they came out on the other side of the town, on the road to Modena, where, turning into the fields, they found a hill-top, well concealed by thickets and a dense wood of chestnut trees, which they entered just at daylight, all dismounting from their horses, cloaks and blankets being disposed upon the ground by Fanfulla and the young men, by way of couch for Niccolò and the young women. Here they reposed all day, refreshing themselves to the best of their abilities, and towards evening, Niccolò judged it best to resume their journey. Before setting off, however, he called around him,

those who had so kindly served him as guard and escort, not a few of whom were still intending to go on with him, and said :

“ My children, the hour is come when we must part. What can I say to you but that I thank you ; that I shall carry away with me the remembrance of you in my heart ; and that, for the few days of life which still remain to me, I shall never forget the courtesy and the love you have shown me ? If it be true, that the blessing of an old man is confirmed by God, I give you that blessing, and with what earnestness, He alone knows ! I, poor old man, can reward you in no other way. Now, return to your homes — to that venerated and sacred father-land, which I shall never more see, but which you will, certainly, one day see free and happy, — and at evening, when you pray with your children, pray also for Niccolò, pray for my sons, slain in this war — I shall be buried in distant lands — but my memory will remain with you, it will still live in the land, for which I have not been deemed worthy to die — this is my last desire, the last hope that remains to me. God bless you all, and now, adieu, forever ! ”

These words were pronounced by Niccolò, in a voice tremulous, from the emotion he experienced, as he sat upon his horse, surrounded by his family ; when he had ended, he gave his horse the rein, turned a last look on those he was to leave behind, and who, motionless and astonished, fixed their eyes upon him, and raising his hand in sign of salutation, or as if pointing to heaven, he took his way through the trees, and was soon lost to their sight.

Regaining the high road, they began to ascend, dismounting when near the summit of the mountain, and, at length, descending into the valley of the Reno, from whence, after a short space, turning to the left, and crossing the tops of the Oppio, opened before them the beautiful valley where lie San Marcello and Gavinana, and which may be called the heart of the mountain of Pistoja.

Whoever visits this region, in our day, finds nought but beauty of situation, peace, plenty, and courtesy among its inhabitants. Time, which spoils so many things, nevertheless improves some, and has here entirely extinguished the ancient feuds of party, and has even obliterated their remembrance.*

* To discover whether the names of the two opposite factions still remained, I asked a peasant of Gavinana, whether, in the different provinces, the people called each other by any particular and abusive names, as is the case in some places, but he merely said, those of San Marcello were called Cancelli, though he could not tell why. Could it be a corruption of Cancellari ? But they, on the contrary, were Panciatichi.

The arms, not required in agriculture here, find employment in the paper-mill, established by a family, whose name (Cin da Pistoja) stands among the first in Italian literature, and who employ their riches in a way most noble, because most useful to all. This occupation, and their various other trades, render this people active and prosperous, and, consequently, contented and happy.

Very differently went matters at the time of our story, for the reader has not forgotten the terrible and cruel doings at San Marcello, nor the mad rage of the Cancellieri. The defeat of Ferruccio, following this event, with the change of fortune, came a change in the places of the two contending parties, and with equal and even greater fury, had the discomfited Panciatichi, persecuted and destroyed their enemies, ruining and burning their dwellings; and our travellers, though it was yet night, soon discovered the signs of their devastation. Here were grape-vines uprooted, trees broken down, or sawed off at the foot, there, a field which had been set fire to, black, crisp and covered with ashes: now, a small hut destroyed by fire, of which only the four walls remained standing, and now, a house of a better sort, plundered by the rabble, partly ruined, doors broken in or torn from their hinges, windows broken, shutters twisted off or dangling, (if indeed, any of them remained); all was silent, desolate and void of inhabitants, and they were, God only knew where, whether killed, escaped, burnt to death or accidentally buried under the ruins, and, perhaps, awaiting there a miserable death. Lamberto recognized the places; the houses he had seen in good condition when passing them, but a few days before, and he said to Niccolò:

"Behold the vengeance of San Marcello. It was not long delayed." As he spoke, they were passing directly before a house, which seemed to be reduced to a worse plight than the others; in many parts it was wholly demolished, so much so, that the bricks, beams and plastering, encumbered the road; when they heard, as if issuing from a hole in the cellar, or from beneath some wood-pile, the faint moans of a voice that asked for mercy, in the name of God. All stopped at the same moment. Fanfulla, Lamberto and Bindo, dismounted from their horses, and rushed into the ruins, calling out, repeatedly, in order to know whither to direct their search, and hearing their cries answered by the same weak and languid lamentations, while Niccolò and the ladies were waiting, in the most anxious expectation, till they at length discovered a human figure, which, dragging itself with difficulty from the hole where it had been concealed, said, in a voice that made their flesh creep:

"Oh! well, kill me, for I can no longer endure this torment, but first, a little water, for God's sake. Oh! fresh water, and then let me die."

They took the miserable man in their arms, and brought him out into the road, and Bindo ran to the torrent of the Limestra, close by, and returned with some water, which the dying man drank eagerly, and, letting the vessel fall from his hands, he raised his head as well as he could, and said, by way of thanks:

"Now I fear you not. Kill me, for I shall be thankful for death, but, cursed be you, and all the Panciatichi party."

Lamberto, recognizing him, exclaimed, "You are Captain Melocchi. Oh! how came you here?"

"Ah!" said the dying man, (for such, in truth, he was,) "I mistook you, I thought you were a detachment of Panciatichi. My house," he continued, with as much fury as he could express, in such a state of weakness, "the Cancellieri party, is defeated. I, wounded, crushed and trampled under foot, have lain here concealed four days — now, what torments! Thirst! I have told you to kill me, but, give me *drink*! Ah! but those *dogs* have not had the joy of seeing the Bravetto die." He laughed. His agony seemed to increase.

"Oh! — if he be living — my cousin — Giovanni — tell him it was Piero who gave me the death-blow; and, let him remember —"

Here, what he said became unintelligible: he seemed, however, to pronounce the words, "kill him:" and expired with these words upon his lips.

The corpse was dragged to the side of the road, so as not to be trodden under foot by the passing mules and horses.

Niccolò's company then resumed their way, horror-struck, as may be supposed, at this hopeless and revolting death-scene, and Lamberto said, "Thou deservedst no other death than this;" and Niccolò, "If it be possible, may God have mercy on this wretch."

Neither Lamberto, nor any of the others, knew this Giovanni, named by Melocchi, but had they known him, they would have been little disposed to transmit to him the cruel message.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It wanted little of midnight, when the cavalcade finally arrived in Gavinani, at the house which Niccolò had, by the nuptial contract, bestowed upon Lamberto, by way of dower, and where one of the riders accompanying them had arrived an hour before, to wake up the steward, and give him time to open the house for the coming guests, and make due preparations for their reception.

This honest steward, who was little more than a peasant, a person strongly attached to the Lapi family, whom he had served from a boy, adhering, as was natural to the Cancellieri party, had been, at this time, molested in various ways by the inimical party, and, protecting himself, as best he could, he still lived in continual fear, so that, at first, he would not answer, supposing that it was the victorious party which were about to arrive, and resolved not to open the door, lest the foe, by this stratagem, should enter and plunder the house. Finally persuaded, however, he opened the door, and then began, in all haste, to prepare one thing and arrange another, aided by his wife and a very sleepy boy, until, at length, hearing the tramp of the horses, he ran down the steps, and found the travellers alighting in a small court-yard, between the house and the road, divided from the latter by a low wall.

That smiling and officious solicitude, which usually appears in the countenance of the steward when paying his salutations to the master on his arrival, was, in Matteo's case, superseded by an expression of equal despondency.

Niccolò, without waiting to exchange many words with him, went forward with his company into a little room, on the lower floor, where candles were lighted, and which, notwithstanding the care of the steward, still retained evident traces of recent disorder. To the close air of rooms seldom used, was added an odor of must and wine, the floor was wet in spots, and strewed with broken crockery, which the good Matteo, taken by surprise, had not had time to sweep away, and, on the main wall, in the centre of which was painted the Florentine device

a white shield with a red lily, was rudely sketched in charcoal, a gallows, in such a way that the shield occupied the place of the victim. Upon the scaffold, in the guise of an executioner, was figured a man, with an imperial crown upon his head, and beside him, on the ladder, where the officiating priest usually stands, another figure, who, from the papal diadem, was doubtless intended for the Pope, by which the ingenious artist had attempted to represent the Emperor, Charles V., and Pope Clement VII., making a trade, by mutual agreement, of the city of Florence, and, in this production, the grandeur of the thought fully corresponded to the execution of the design. The walls around were marred with words, also written in charcoal, of style and orthography of the most illiterate order. "Long live the Palle! Death to the Marzocco! May the Cancellieri go to the devil, the hangman," &c.

And, while the old man, observing these insolent words, looked at them with an evident change of countenance, the steward said, still terrified and almost weeping :

"You see, Messere, how these vile rascals have injured the house. And it is an express miracle of God, that I am living at this day. Such things as we have seen—I thought it must be the end of the world—First, the rout of Ferruccio, for in this part of the country the shot rattled about our ears like hail; then, those traitors Panciatichi, to do the rest, and there is not a family in Gavinana that is not weeping—there is not a house that hasn't been robbed, and so many poor creatures killed and wounded—and those that are left, are in fear of something worse to come. I could not fly, it was my duty to guard your property here. And they have come in here to hold their drunken revels, and have wasted every good thing that God gave us, that there was in the house. And then, drunk as beasts, they would knock about Caterina and me—and then this filthiness on the walls—and do you know what they told me? 'When we come back, if we find that you have touched these walls, we will hang *you* by the neck, in the place of that shield.' And so I, poor fellow, have never dared to clean them."

"If you do not, I do," said Bindo, angrily grasping a broom that stood in the corner, and disposing himself to erase these disagreeable scrawls, but Niccolò stopped him saying :

"We shall go away, Bindo, but this honest man remains here; who will defend him, if these men return and molest him. It is the lot of the conquered to suffer outrage. This is *our bitter bread* henceforth. And not to be forced to suffer this, we must know how to conquer—and this we have known."

"The steward thanked Niccolò with a look of gratitude, for to see Bindo with the broom in the air, and to have the rope around his own neck, seemed to him one and the same thing.

In the meantime, Caterina appeared with some trifle for supper; and if they had not known that the house had been sacked, they might have guessed it from the appearance of the repast, which consisted of a little salad, a small piece of cheese, and two loaves of black bread, of which one only was entire. The poor woman, with a most sorrowful countenance, and red, swollen eyes, made the few necessary preparations without speaking, and after these first few and brief words, no one spoke, but all remained absorbed in their thoughts, sitting upon the bench which ran round the sides of the room; and this silence seemed the more sad, that no voice, no sound, was heard even from without, although this was in the very heart of the town, not far from the Piazza. The crowing of a cock, or the barking of a dog, would, at least, have given sign of living thing, but this desolate town had the aspect of a cemetery, and the more so, as the wind, entering the opened windows, brought with it a sepulchral odor, the reason of which Matteo explained by saying:

"After the battle, there were in the Piazza more than twelve hundred dead, and not taking the trouble to carry them away, they buried them where they were — but to despatch the business, they did not cover them with more than three inches of earth. God grant, that the dead may not kill the few living, or bring the pestilence upon us!"

"And among them," asked Niccolò quickly, "was the great Ferruccio thus hurriedly thrust into the earth?"

"No, Messere, he was buried apart, under the eaves at the side of the church."

"Can you show me where he lies?"

"I can, for I was under the command of a company of pioneers, and helped to dig his grave."

"Lead us there immediately. Come, children, let us thus at least, do honor to the greatest man ever born in Florence."

The old man rose eagerly, and without any appearance of weariness, and went out with his sons and the two daughters, who, though not required to do so, out of regard to the fatigue they had endured, were desirous to prostrate themselves upon Ferruccio's honored grave. Matteo preceded them along the narrow street, carrying a lantern, whose feeble and vacillating gleam revealed many houses, and perhaps the greater part of them, abandoned by their tenants, the doors torn off and thrown on the ground along the walls.

Fanfulla, quickly recognizing the spot, said, "Here is where we got that box on the ear, and here, in this little space, what a dance we had that day ! and here, you see, just here, the Commissary with that file of captains, came down with such fury on the German infantry."

Niccolo, eagerly listening to the words of Fanfulla, was never tired of asking him all the particulars, not so much of the battle, as of Ferruccio's doings, for they had now entered the Piazza, and were on the very spot, where he had distinguished himself. Stopping there a short time, without regarding the sickening stench which was more potent there than elsewhere, they at length passed on, crossing the square to reach the church, their foot-steps frequently sinking into the soft, freshly stirred earth, and the women shuddering, to think what they were trampling under foot.

Matteo at length stopped close to the side of the old church, and setting the lantern on the ground, said, "Here is where that brave gentleman was laid."

On the ground, was a space as long and broad as that of a large-sized human body, where the earth seemed, indeed, to have been recently upturned, and which, from the many prints of shoes and bare feet, they knew had been diligently trodden down. Niccolò, seeing under his very eyes, this earth still saturated with the blood of his friend, of the man, who, to him was the sublime ideal of everything grand and virtuous on earth, fell on his knees on the grave, trembling with emotion, and inclining his head, he kissed the moist mould, and bowing his forehead upon it, remained there motionless ; and all the others did the same. The poor old man was heard to groan, sob, and, at length, he burst into tears. Soon becoming more composed, he raised his eyes and hands to heaven, saying : " Oh ! if from the sacred and blessed place where this great soul now dwells in glory, he disdains not to let fall a glance on this dark world, he will, perhaps, see these my tears, — he will see, that from that city for which he shed his blood, even to the last drop, we exiles, at least, have come, to do him this last honor, the only one we can do in our present misery. Ferruccio ! Ferruccio ! Was this, then, to be thy burial ? And the Medici, the destroyers of their country, shall they lie honored in San Lorenzo ? Will they not feel ashamed to leave thee here ? Will they not, at least, raise a cross over thy bones ? A stone which shall say, ' Here lies Ferruccio ! ' "

So spoke Niccolò ; and time has demonstrated, whether he had a just idea of Medicean generosity, which left the bones of Ferruccio where they were, and placed over them neither cross

nor stone, and never has done so to this day, so that not even tradition has preserved the memory of the spot, where lies the bravest and most virtuous of the Tuscans. This is said incidentally, and may go for what it is worth.*

Then, suddenly regretting that he had formed such a wish, he added, as if reproaching himself, "But what am I saying? Am I losing my senses? As if thou hadst need of honors from them! If they have them, let them keep them for their own miserable ashes, for, even under their marble monuments, the vengeance of God will seek them out at the last day! And thou, on the contrary, if thou canst hear me, brave spirit, thou wilt enjoy this our humble homage, — for know that it is what the tombs of thine and our enemies can never boast of; know that so long as the world endures, the earth of this humble grave will be more honored by generous souls, than the insolent splendor of their sepulchres! Know, that the shame which they believe they have brought upon thee, by leaving thee in this dishonored corner, will recoil upon them in equal infamy, in future centuries, and with future generations, for all the power of tyrants, thank God, is not sufficient to shield them from the infamy they deserve."

While Niccolò, with strong emotion and an almost inspired manner, was uttering these words, to which his family reverently kneeling, were attentively listening, there emerged from beneath the portico of the church, six men-at-arms, with swords drawn, followed by perhaps fifty peasants, armed with pikes, sickles or clubs, and before the surprised party were aware of the attack, they found themselves on the ground under a heap of men, the points of whose swords and pikes were thrust in their faces, or pointed at their throats and breasts, grasped by a hundred hands, and held down by the knees and feet of multitudes, while a voice, issuing from the midst of their assailants, cried out, "Whoever moves, is a dead man! You are the prisoners of the Pope!" In the meantime, these *sgherri* had snatched the swords and other arms from the young men, who certainly would not have lacked the courage nor the will to defend Niccolò, even with the certainty of being cut to pieces, but the ruin which fell so unexpectedly upon them, actually took away the power of moving a finger, and deprived them of the means of using limbs or weapons.

The women uttered cries which were quickly stifled by rude hands, no less than by brutal menaces, and before one of these

* Since these pages were written, a paltry stone has been erected, indicating the spot where Ferruccio died.

villains ventured to lift himself from their victims, whom they held down by the weight of their bodies, others, introducing themselves into the midst of this entanglement of arms and legs, had soon bound the prisoners with the ropes with which they had provided themselves, and so firmly too, that it was easy to see in what account they held them, and only when thus secured, were their prisoners suffered to rise.

Who can tell the rage, the consternation of these miserable victims, at finding themselves so unexpectedly in the power of their enemies, just as they believed their escape certain?

Lamberto and Bindo, with wandering and downcast looks, and breasts trembling and swelling with impotent rage, seemed like two wild beasts caught in a net: Maurice, who, following the fortunes of his master, had been seized with the others, swore in his throat in German; while Fanfulla, whose strange and reckless nature never forsook him, said, shaking his head, whistling and half smiling — “Very courteous treatment, upon my word! we could expect nothing better!” Two of these wretches held the weeping women by the arms, a little apart from the rest. Niccolò, with august and venerable brow, said, in lofty and composed tone, “I know what it means for *me* to be a prisoner of the Pope,” — and a bitter and disdainful smile passed over his lips, as if to say, “It is little he can take from me now!”

Turning then to his sons, and pointing to the fosse, where Ferruccio was buried, he added, “From him I have learned how to die, but perhaps it was not necessary.”

Well knew the old man that it was *his* death that was desired, and not that of his sons or the others, and, therefore, it disturbed him little, but recollecting Troilo at this moment, and the price set, as he supposed, upon his head, and believing *him* to be utterly lost, his agitation greatly increased. He looked around sally, seeking him with his eye, and saying, “I am pained for thee, my son Troilo!” And there being no other light than the lantern carried by Matteo, he tried a long time to discover him: at length he descried him afar off, standing upright and motionless, his arms crossed upon his chest, head sunk upon his breast, and perceived that he was neither bound, nor in guard of any of the soldiers, who had taken so much care to prevent the escape of the others.

The face of the young man, by nature so handsome, was at this moment, as fearful and ugly as his treachery: like Cain, Judas, and other enormous sinners, his torment had already begun — that great set of all torments, remorse — and this too, entirely severed from all thoughts of hope or repentance.

Niccolò read his crime written upon his forehead, and he observed on the faces of the soldiers a smile of derision which said, "You need give yourself no trouble about him!"

The veil was rent, which had so long concealed the truth from him, and this was now revealed in all its naked enormity. He stretched out his hands and arms, which were bound at the wrists by a rough cord, and in a tone which struck to the heart, even the villains who surrounded him, said, looking at Troilo:

"Then he *was* a traitor!"

In the sound of these words, the manner of pronouncing them, and the gesture of the old man, there was such an intense and woful conviction, of the truth, that, I repeat it, it awoke a sense of compassion, even in the hearts of these rude and furious *sgherri*.

But Liza, poor Liza! As if a fiery dart had penetrated her living flesh, she tore herself from the hands of those who held her, with the nervous and convulsive force of desperate passion, and rushing to her father, cried:

"Why do you call him *traitor*? How? Who can say my Troilo is a traitor? What has he done?"

But, unable to run in search of him, for she was immediately retaken, and held by the men from whom she had escaped, she still thrust her body and head forward, seeking with her eyes for her husband, and continuing to repeat.

"Oh! *traitor*! My Troilo a *traitor*! Oh! father, how could you say those horrible words? And at such a time!"

At last, she, too, saw him, for he still stood in the same place, in the same attitude, and with the same expression; and the same impression which Niccolò had received, the same thought, the same certainty, forced itself upon Liza, who felt the chill of death at the sight of that face, so disfigured by crime, and she turned hers away, and pressed her hands upon her eyes; nevertheless, conquering this first feeling, and yielding to returning hope, she said, weeping, but without looking at her husband, except by a furtive glance:

"Oh! Troilo! Come! Speak! Do you not hear? Why do you stand there so? What mystery is there beneath all this? Oh! Troilo, Troilo! Is it possible your despairing Liza cannot obtain one word?"

At last with impetuous and indescribable frenzy, she exclaimed: "Miserable wretch! Say, at least, it is true! That you are a traitor! Then I shall, at least, be relieved from this dreadful uncertainty!"

For sole answer, Troilo shrugged his shoulders, and walked off, and was soon lost, in the darkness of the night.

Liza became white and cold as a marble statue, her arms dropped, and she also said :

"He *was* a traitor!"

Then, falling as if dead at the feet of Niccolò, with her forehead on the earth, she said, with failing voice :

"And I, unhappy wretch, am the cause of all!"

"It is but too true!" answered the old man, and the soldiers, unwilling to remain longer witnesses of a scene that was becoming too serious for them, began to move on, conducting the prisoners towards the house, from whence they had so recently issued.

As they walked along, Maurice, who was at Lamberto's side, said, with a sigh, in an under tone, "Remember that evening I said I would not drink! I wouldn't drink wine, to make peace with Messer Droile! He's a traitor! Wasn't poor Maurice right?"

"You were but too much in the right," said Lamberto.

Reconducted thus to their house, Niccolò was shut up in one room, the young women in another, and the young men in a third, diligently guarded by armed men, until such time as they should be sent on to Florence.

The blow was struck, Niccolò seized, and the leader of this noble expedition, Messer Benedetto de' Nobili, who, concealed behind the shoulders of his men, had cried out, "You are prisoners of the Pope!" why had he not come forward, why did he not show himself? Because the coward had not the courage to encounter the gaze of Niccolò, which had proved too much, even for the barefacedness of Troilo! God be praised, that, so long as the world endures, in the presence of certain men, villains, sold to the powers of darkness, must bow their heads in the dust! Now that the prisoners were shut up and well guarded, and there was no risk of meeting them, the two traitors entered the house, accompanied by Selvaggia, to whom we have not the heart, to attach the same blame, since her conduct has not yet fully revealed her intentions.

And, at any rate, what should not be pardoned, to a love like that which was consuming her, and which should rather be called delirium, fury, madness? And so much the more, when it is remembered how long and desperate had been the sufferings of this poor girl, the wrongs, the derision, the contempt which had been her sole bread, if the expression be allowable, ever since her eyes had opened to the light, her heart to affection? Too many such souls, on entering the world, bring with *them the seeds of heroic virtue, or of tremendous crime. Circumstances, the society into which they are accidentally thrown,*

develops the one or the other. Hence, virtue or vice, happiness or misery.

We know the lot that fell to Selvaggia, who, having drained the cup of sorrow to its very dregs, must have died in her anguish, had not one powerful motive kept her alive, the hope of vengeance. For this alone, she had endured life, had thought, moved and acted, from that terrible night, when, on the road to Empoli, she saw Lamberto for the last time: this had been the subject of the cogitations of her secret soul, in the silence of sleepless nights, or in the long hours passed in quiet or in noise, whether amid the multitude, or away from all, she was always alone with this ever present, unvarying thought, which glimmered in her clouded mind like a lone star amid the darkness.

She would have vengeance, the unhappy woman! She had revolved the matter at her leisure, and she had chosen what seldom or never was imagined by human heart, and it had been, so to say, her nourishment; and amid a thousand cares and hardships, she had, at length, arrived at the point of its completion. The moment had come.

Around the table, on which was spread the miserable supper, still untouched by the poor prisoners, were seated, Messer Benedetto, Troilo and Selvaggia. The former, as a protection from the risks he might incur in this enterprise, was heavily steeled in armor, with breast and back-piece, which on the shoulders and under the armpits, were made to meet by virtue of strong straps, but which, on the sides, his three foot circumference of paunch, would have defied all attempts to bring together, and they remained open, a hand's breadth or so apart, and thus afforded but little defence. The unaccustomed weight and inconvenience of this costume, added to the heat, which was still intense, although it was night, was more than the wicked old villain could well bear, and he felt as if he had a mountain on his back. He took off his indented and rusty helmet, and wiped the sweat from his pale, flabby face, whistling and blowing out his cheeks.

Selvaggia, covered with the glittering armor of a cuirassier, gave no token of weariness, but with elbows resting upon the table, and immersed in her own thoughts, was whittling with a knife, which had happened to lie under her hand.

Troilo, lightly accoutred in a coat of mail, had a livid countenance, and a fearful expression in his eyes, that filled the observer with horror.

But he tried to appear undaunted, tried to appear a more reckless villain than his companion, and he grew furious internally, on seeing that the face of this old wry-faced knave,

showed no other alteration than that produced by fatigue and heat. At length, conscious that his aspect betrayed him, he applied himself to a flask of wine, drank, and thinking to turn the whole thing into a jest, burst into a loud laugh, which was too evidently forced, saying :

"Do you know what I am thinking of, Messer Benedetto? You remember that night at the *buca* of S. Girolamo, when I hit you on the back with those cords — all by mistake — you see — 'twould have been well for you if you had been equipped as you are now, with all that armor upon you ; you look like a paladin of France !"

"Would that I were at the *buca* now, instead of being here," answered the old hypocrite, for, unlike Troilo, though devoid of all feelings of humanity, he yet studied to simulate the appearance of it, with the same diversity which exists between the novitiate and the matriculated rogue.

"These scenes sicken me," he continued, with an expression of compunction — "that poor Niccolò ! that poor family —" then with a great sigh : "Ah ! *reasons of state* are terrible things ! and to execute them, to execute the laws and ordinances, costs great sacrifices !"

The presence of Selvaggia, and of several soldiers, who stood at the door, guarding the entrance, probably induced Nobili to speak thus. But he had to do with Troilo, who imitating his looks, his tone and his sigh, answered :

"Ah ! I pity you, poor Messer Benedetto ! They are great things, those beautiful bags of ducats — I mean, those laws, ordinances and *reasons of state* — have I forgotten anything ?"

Nobili writhed, and gave Troilo a look, as if to say, "Those people are hearing us," and begging him to desist. But Troilo, who felt at this moment, full of an inexplicable venom, as one does, who is compelled to loathe and despise himself, and who must give vent to his feelings, continued, with a perfidious smile, "Messer Benedetto, my dear, you are as tired and as completely exhausted as the ass of a tread-mill, and yet, you try to take upon yourself this other burden, of covering your face with the mask of an honest man — you see yourself, how it makes you sweat — your cheeks are dropping like a water-pot ! you'll make yourself sick ! It's all of no use, as you may see. Do as I do, I am a knave, and I own it. I am a traitor, and what of that ? Great captains, kings, popes and emperors are the same, and worse, when they find no other way. I manage my affairs to the best of my ability, and let him do better who can. Am I not right, Selvaggia ?"

And rising, and no longer with a facetious, joking air, but

suddenly changing into an angry mood, in which his face was a faithful portrait of the hell in his breast, he walked up and down the room, chafing with rage:

"I cannot abide these hypocrites — these serpents, with angel faces. Who thanks them for their trouble? Neither God nor the devil, that is certain!"

And he continued to walk backwards and forwards, fuming and muttering between his teeth.

Selvaggia took little or no notice of him. Il Nobili, half frightened at this sudden, and apparently, causeless fit of passion, said, looking at him in astonishment:

"Pray, what has happened, to make you so angry?"

Troilo turned upon him like a viper: then, suddenly, conscious that his rage availed him nothing, and only made him ridiculous, he burst into a loud, convulsive, senseless laugh, and pouring out a cup, brimming full of wine, he presented it to Nobili, trolling a snatch as he did so: the old man accepted it, saying, "I understand — you're a sad madcap!" and drank.

At this moment, Michele, Troilo's servant, who had come in the squadron headed by Messer Benedetto, entered, saying:

"Your wife, up stairs —"

"There was nothing wanting but this—to have a wife!" said Troilo, laughing.

"It is Mademoiselle Liza, then, that they do not know what to do with; she has thrown herself on the ground, like a shred in a corner, her eyes fixed and staring, and she seems to be out of her senses, constantly saying, she wants *you*, she wants to speak with you, and that is every word they can get from her; her sister and the maid stand around her, but she does not seem to hear or understand, and they cannot tell what malady has seized her."

"The canker has seized her, and may it take you too, you rascally poltroon!" said Troilo, advancing, with closed fist, upon his servant, who quickly retreated and went out, Troilo continuing to cry out after him:

"Who told you to come here and trouble me with it, you son of a hangman? Am I a surgeon or apothecary? Do you think I can cure the ailments of the women? Cursed be the hour when you crossed my path! This is very curious! Michele, Michele!" he cried, growing more and more irritated, and Michele re-appeared.

"Tell her and all the others up there, that what we have done, was by order of our superiors—that it grieves us to the heart—but that it could not be otherwise. And go to—and don't have the presumption to show yourself in my presence

again, till you are called." Michele disappeared, and Troilo had recourse to his flask. The miserable wretch hoped to drown in wine, the insufferable torment that was consuming him. He drank in silence, then said, peevishly:

"Is there any way of ascertaining the time of night? What an eternal night this has been! Is there no clock on the campanile, don't they ever strike the hours in this cursed town?"

A soldier at the door said, "They have hung four Cancellieri to the rope for a pendulum, and now their feet touch the ground, and so the clock has stopped."

Several other soldiers, who were dozing on the straw in the court-yard, laughed at this, and muttered something by way of jest, and then all was silent again.

The light, that was burning on the table, grew dim, and dwindled for lack of oil.

Messer Benedetto had settled himself to rest in a corner, where, having made a pillow of his cloak, he was now soundly snoring, and many others were doing the same, in the court, on the steps, and in the street, for it was near day-break, an hour when sleep is most invincible.

Selvaggia, with her head resting on her hands, knew not whether she slept or waked. And Troilo, who had hoped with the intoxicating draught, to drive off the tremendous thoughts which infested him, had, instead, only rendered them additionally disturbing and fearful. His mind became agitated by a thousand strange and enormous fancies; he seemed to see frightful and fleeting forms pass before his eyes, which filled his soul with continual and puerile terror.

The quiet which surrounded him, the feeble glimmer of the dying lamp, added to his gloom; with studied effort he directed his thought to the advantages he expected to reap from his crime. He thought, "To-morrow, at this time, I shall have what I have so much desired! Laudomia will be mine! Then the Medici will make me noble and rich, and I shall live in splendor and honor!" But these images had suddenly lost for him all their life and beauty, they seemed like mere fallacious phantoms, evoked by his evil genius to lure him on to crime.

Enraged at seeing Messer Benedetto quietly sleeping, he thought, "He is a greater villain than I. He is no braver than I; he has no more courage; and yet he snores there like a pig, as if he had conducted to its termination, a holy work!"

At last, impatient and vexed to find himself so vile, he said, "*Oh! well, it is all the folly of youth! Let us think about setting off, and, with the sun, all these womanish superstitious*

will vanish," and resolutely approaching Nobili, he pulled him by the arm saying:

"Come, there is no more time for sleeping, we must give orders for our departure."

The old man roused himself, and drawing a long breath two or three times, rubbing his eyes, and giving an occasional groan as he attempted to move, for his uncomfortable position and the pressure of his armor, had greatly stiffened him, he rose up, and was soon tolerably awake.

Selvaggia, also, who, during the whole night, had not uttered a word, approached and seated herself at the table with them, the soldiers mustered, the riders began to make ready their beasts, and in the meantime, a fresh breeze from the mountains, which, entering the window, extinguished the last ray of the lamp, announced the approach of dawn.

"Now," said Troilo, "my plan is, to send the prisoners forward, accompanied by our men and those Panciatichi clowns. You do not like *scenes*, you say. I do not like weeping. We will follow on at our convenience; the mountain is already safe from the Cancellieri, and there is no fear of anything else. When we shall be near Prato, you, Messer Benedetto, will speed your way to Florence, taking with you Niccolò, Fanfulla, Bindo, Maurice and Liza, with the maid, whom you will send home, for I have already provided for her. She shall not want bread. I am a gentleman, and know what belongs to one.

"Selvaggia and I will take the left hand road, and go to the villa of Messer Baccio, with Laudomia and Lamberto—we have to do with both—and never fear, Selvaggia, I will give you your fill of vengeance, provided you stand by me, whatever befall us."

"You need give yourself no uneasiness about that," replied the woman, shortly. She then added, "But, if you mind my advice, you will take Fanfulla with us, as well as the other two, instead of sending them to Florence. If they go there, they will, probably, be set at liberty, for the government want Niccolò and not them, and, no sooner free, their first thought will be to set off in pursuit of you. You know their courage, — Fanfulla's particularly — I merely wished to warn you."

"You speak well indeed! What a fool was I not to think of it, — and if you had not done so, we should have had a merry dance of it. It is true there are four of them, and we, with Michele, but three, but then they are bound, and without arms, and we are armed; we might take with us one or two of these soldiers, but, to tell the truth, the fewer there are of us, the better I like it, and, in certain cases, when one can do

without witnesses it is always better. No, no, alone, among ourselves! Holloa, Michele! bring me some water! I don't know — I feel out of tune — it may be that cursed wine — I feel a burning heat — I would we were once out of these cursed walls!"

The water being brought, he drank, bathed his face, and, at the same time, their horses appeared at the door. Troilo, Il Nobili and Selvaggia, seated themselves in the saddle, and, leaving their orders with the men-at-arms and Michele, as to the mode of conveying the prisoners, they passed through the narrow streets of Gavinana, to a sequestered spot, where they could see them when they started, with the intention of following them at a distance.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE road leading from Pistoja to Florence, passing through Prato, runs all the way at a short distance from that chain of mountains which closes the valley of the Arno on the west. The many peaks which spring from the stony, arid tops of the Appenines, gradually descend to the plain, forming, at first, steep and tortuous precipices, then, fresh valleys, shaded by the dense foliage of the chestnut, and, at length, expanding into undulating vales of olive and vineyards, among which, scattered over the gentle eminences, gleam white villas and cottages. The slopes of these mountain-peaks, which extend some more and some less into the plain, lose themselves in gentle declivities, or, forming bold promontories, descend in sharp, angular precipices to the plain.

Three miles from Prato, on an isolated hill, stands M. Murlo, the castle of the Strozzi, from whence Messer Fillippo and Baccio Valori, several years after the epoch of which we treat, were conducted, the one to execution, the other to the prison which he had helped to build with his own money, and which became at last his voluntary tomb. Thus (in this world if not in the other) was paid their reckoning with the country they had betrayed. Beyond M. Murlo, a broad eminence, rising in amphitheatre, extends towards the mountains, on whose summit, elevated high above the plain, is seated the villa, then in the possession of Baccio Valori, and now belonging to the Tempi family, and called the Barone.

At that point of the high road, from whence one begins to descry the towers of Murlo, the company conducting Niccolò and the other prisoners, arrived on the day after their departure from Gavinana, just when, a half hour after sunset, the chime of bells, floating on the air, now from this one of the adjacent valleys, now from that, were sounding for the Ave Maria. What thoughts arose in the hearts of our afflicted ones, on hearing these sounds, he may imagine, who is capable of appreciating the sweet and loving beauty of these lines:

“Era quell' ora che volge il disio,
 De' naviganti intenerisce il cuore,
 Lo di ch'han detto ai dolci amici addio,
 E che 'l novello pellegrin, d'amore
 Punge, s'egli ode squilla di lontano
 Che puja il giorno pianger che si muore.”

And, to the ear of our traitors, that sound must have seemed as if bewailing other and greater misfortune. They journeyed on in silence, the old man, and the women, particularly, excessively wearied by the long journey, their physical fatigue increased by their mental agitation, and, kept apart from each other by their conductors, they had not the consolation of exchanging a word or look.

The time of separating the prisoners having arrived, Troilo, who was following them at a distance, with Messer Benedetto and Selvaggia, stopped, and giving his men the signal they had agreed upon, they halted, retaining in their midst, Laudomia, Lambert, Maurice, Bindo and Fanfulla; Niccolò, Liza and Mona Fede, without suspecting anything, still pursuing their way towards Florence, Nobili, spurring on his horse and quickly rejoining them.

Troilo, who did not wish his prisoners to know whither they were going, had given the requisite orders to Michele, so that they had no sooner stopped, than they were blindfolded, and made to dismount (except Laudomia, they contented themselves with merely covering her eyes), and their horses were led away by one of the knaves belonging to the troop that went forward with Niccolò. To these operations, which presaged nothing good, the prisoners made no resistance, or opposed any defence. What could they do? Their arms were tightly bound on their breasts, by cords passed round many times, and they would not gratify their enemies by impotent rage. They awaited death in silence, for they fully believed they were to be shot in some ditch. They felt, however, hands in contact with their persons, trying the strength of the cords, tightening them and multiplying the knots. With the ends of the ropes they were now tied together two and two, and then a voice cried out, “Forward,” and they set out, Michele leading Laudomia's horse.

Several men of the company had remained, to assist at these operations, and when they were ended, Troilo dismissed them, and they rejoined the others.

Troilo, with his charge, arriving, after about fifty steps, at the *Ponte alle Troje* (Sow's Bridge), (the name is not euphonious, but that is no fault of mine), where, to proceed to the Barone, it is

necessary to leave the main road, and having passed the bridge, take a narrow street on the left. Troilo, I say, gave orders to Michele to stop the prisoners, and give them two or three turns, to make them lose the direction, and the same was done with the horse of Laudomia. Then, resuming their way, after an hour's journey, they arrived at the gate of the villa. It was pitch dark.

Two huge mastiffs, hearing the noise of the horses' feet, rushed furiously at the bars, snarling and barking; but a figure appeared from within, and coming between the dogs and the gate, drove them away with a kick, saying in a deep, imperative tone, "To the kitchen, Grifone. Into the house with you, quick, Alano," and the dogs retreated, growling in their throats. The gate was then opened, all entered, and the blindfolded prisoners heard the drawing of bolts as the gate closed after them. They passed on, while Troilo and Selvaggia stopped to speak to the man who admitted them; he was the custodian of the villa, formerly a highwayman, who had been saved from beheading by his present master.

"Welcome, gentlemen," said he, "Messer Baccio has just sent a man here, to inform me that you were coming, and that I was to obey you in everything. Let me know your commands. In the meantime, I have made what preparations I could. But we do not live very well in these places."

"Oh! we need but little. But, first of all, what's your name, my honest fellow?"

"My father, who kept an inn in Maremma, near Vada—do'n't you know it?—that inn called La Forca de' Petri, had me baptized by the name of Giovan. Then I was with the family of the sheriff of Pisa, and they called me Corporal Tempo Cattivo. Now, these peasants, when they are out of my hearing, call me the *Sbirello*; when they address me, they call me Messer Vanni. If that suits you, call me that."

"Well, then, my dear Messer Vanni," said Troilo, smiling, "I have come to stay one day with you, or, at most, two. First of all, there must be a room, a cellar, or a hole, where there are good doors and bolts, to shut up those men you just saw pass, tied up like sausages, if you noticed."

"Oh! you want rooms for prison cells? Well, you see the whole palace is a prison, from top to bottom; it is a match for Volterra."

"Well, and another thing; you saw, I presume, a lady on horseback. The best chamber and the best bed for her; in short, the best of everything you have."

"Oh! well, then she must be put into the yellow room

where Messer Baccio's nun used to be, at least I have been told so by certain old men around here — they say, too, that one hears them here.* I've never seen any of them, — though, in fact, I never sleep here, I stay at a peasant's house a little way off. However, they tell a horrible story of this woman, in the time of Cosimo the elder; of a parish priest who used to frequent the house, and one day he disappeared, and they will have it, that for jealousy, this woman shut him up in a fosse in the foundations of the castle, and from a trap-door in her chamber, communicating with these lower regions, she let down to him with a rope, a little mouldy bread, and then she ceased to do that — and years afterwards, he was found, with his hands all gnawed, stretched out and dried up like the skin of a grass-hopper; and now they say, that on St. John's night, the two are seen making the rounds of the terrace below the towers, and then tumbling down into the ditch."

"There is little harm in it, if that's all; for it's a long time from now to St. John's night. Now, then, let's think of shutting up those people, and picking up a little something for them to eat, for I do not intend to serve them as the nun did the priest. Zounds! when I am dead, I don't want to dance a country dance over the battlements with them at my side."

"Oh! then they are prisoners who are to be well treated," demanded the Sbiretto, with a manner that showed with how much indifference he would have executed an order to strangle them.

"That is," answered Troilo, turning to Selvaggia, "three of them; yes, the fourth, my companion here, will dispose of as he pleases, and if it is proposed to —"

"Oh! it's all one to me," quickly interrupted the other, to save Troilo the trouble of explaining himself, "you know the saying, 'I stay with the friars and dig the garden,' what you order me to do, that I shall do, neither more nor less."

"A more convenient man could not be found," said Troilo, as he went forward, preceded by the bailiff, who showed him the way. Michele, with the others, being unacquainted with the place, had stopped in a field before the villa, but, being joined by Troilo and Selvaggia, they prepared to enter the house.

But here, not from a mania for describing, but for the ready comprehension of what we are about to relate, it will be necessary to say something of this villa or castle, either of which it may be properly called, as every one knows that the villas of these times were as much one as the other.

* *Tuscan mode of saying there are ghosts therabouts.*

It was a quadrilateral building, broader in front than at the sides, hollow in the centre, enclosing a court surrounded by a piazza, in one corner of which was a well, with two stone posts and a cross-beam, from which hung a pulley. The front, which was built of square blocks of *travertino* (a white stone of Rome), had but few windows, and those wide apart, and so closely grated, that one could not easily thrust his hand between the bars. The great doorway, about eight feet from the ground, was reached by ascending a kind of causeway, formed of four intersecting branches of stone, on which grew, vigorous and unmolested, nettles, brambles and other weeds; the door itself was of oak, overlaid with plates of iron, and studded with huge nails, and above it rose a tower, much higher than the rest of the house, and the summit of each was furnished with a terrace, supported by arches, and crowned by Ghibelline battlements.

On entering, you were admitted into the hollow circuit of the tower, where, upon occasion, from a platform in its top, the master of the house might easily reconnoitre an unwelcome guest, and take measures accordingly.

The aspect of this villa, though some what transformed from the Michelangelical inspirations of an architect of the seventeenth century, still retains many indications of its ancient structure. The plan of the edifice is the same; the tower over the main entrance, now shorn of its battlements, serves as the place of the clock. The *travertini* of the façade still remain visible on its angles, and, even in the last left-hand room, on the lower floor, the bed and furniture are still covered with yellow silk, as if proscription had given exclusion to every other color. Knocking on the walls around, one particular place sends back a hollow sound, whether the place of the trap-door, or not, we do not venture to assert.

Before introducing the prisoners, Troilo wished to inspect the place himself; he, therefore, gave Michele orders to wait a little, and the prisoners, bound and blindfolded, not knowing whether they were guarded by few or many, made no attempt to stir.

The castellan, groping his way along, thrust an enormous key into the rusty lock, which for some time resisted his efforts, but at length turned with a screeching sound, and he opened the door. He entered, followed by Troilo and Selvaggia. Taking up the lantern, which he had left burning in a corner, and turning to the left, they went up four steps, and came into that portion of the house usually occupied by the family, consisting, first, of an ante-chamber, filled with family portraits

some of the subjects of which were arrayed in the *lucco*, others in cuirasse, and others still in priestly habiliments. On one of the walls was a rack, filled with weapons, spears, swords, and other warlike arms, then a grand saloon of reception, and, at last, the famous yellow room, hung with yellow damask, (for these were times of great luxury,) the bed, with its twisted columns of dark walnut, and the trunks, arm-chairs and bureaux, in short, the whole furniture, having all the elegance of the fifteenth century.

As they entered, they saw, by the light of the lantern, a great number of large bats, flying about the walls and ceiling.

The Sbiretto exclaimed angrily, "Pests! Out with you! Those little doors ought to have been closed." And he pointed to an aperture in the wall, like a cupboard, under which was a *prie-dieu*. Troilo, approaching it, perceived that it was not a cupboard, but resembled more the mouth of a well. Above, hung a pulley with its rope, which lost itself in this hole, from whence a cold, damp wind blew in his face, like that which proceeds from cellars, accompanied with a smell of mould and moist earth; he shook the rope a little, and heard a hollow sound of something solid striking against the walls, which seemed to come from a distance of half a mile under ground; turning to his guide, who had opened the windows, and was trying to drive out the bats, he said, smiling:

"Here is where the *friend* was put, probably?"

"Yes, there, just there, so they say."

"And whither does this well lead?"

"Who knows that? Perhaps, if the house were pulled down, we should find out, but in all the cellars and underground places, there is no sign of door or passage, giving entrance underneath. I tried one day to see how long the cord was. It goes down, to say the least, to twice the depth of the cellars."

"Oh! didn't you tell me *such* and *such* things were found after many years?"

"So say these old men, but who has ever seen them? No one."

Just then, more bats coming up from the shaft, flapped their wings in Troilo's face, who, starting back with horror, seized the little doors of the pretended cupboard, and slammed them to with such force that they remained closed, and he then saw they were contrived and painted so as to form a niche, in which were represented two saints, while the slender column which divided them, served to skilfully conceal the opening, at a time when the doors were not so warped and shrunken as at present.

"Ho! ho!" said Troilo, "'behind the cross there is the devil,' as the Spaniards say, and here, behind the saints, there was the priest. No matter, let's leave him where he is, and think of our own affairs. This room, then, is for the lady. Very well, but — what have you there upon that table? Bravo, my dear Vanni, wine, fruit. You are a grand fellow. If I were Pope, I would make you cardinal. Now we will go and look at the prisoners' quarters."

The Sbiretto, after lighting two candles, which he left there, resumed his lantern, and, preceding the others, returned into the court-yard. Beneath the main entrance, in front, was a low door, which was reached by descending an excavation made in the ground. This door being with some difficulty opened, and the ground continuing to slope for some little distance, they came through a sort of corridor, into a spacious vault, which extended under the piazza, and was lighted by four apertures, on a level with the pavement, and secured by strong iron bars. Here were casks, timber, beams, tools, and a little of everything.

"If they escape from this place, gentlemen, they will do well," said the castellan, and neither Troilo nor Selvaggia, after having looked and walked through the whole length of the cellar, could entertain a doubt of the security of such a dungeon.

"Are you satisfied?" said Troilo to the woman; "I have arranged *my* affairs; as a good comrade, I wish to see *yours* settled also."

"I am." And glancing around, she said, beating the ground with her foot, "By the Cross, I shall be master here. Here, one may curse the courtesan, but not laugh at her — not mock her."

"Bravo! Selvaggia. I like you — I was almost going to say, I envy you. To be sure, my part is not to be despised; but to have an enemy like this, one who has insulted you beyond endurance, whom you have followed so long, whom you have watched, until, finally, you can say, I have him in my hands, under my feet — he is my property — I can destroy him by a lingering death of years, or in a moment, just as I please, and neither heaven nor hell can rescue him from my hands. Ah! I envy you, I envy you. I hope you will know how to enjoy it, for such luck falls to few."

"I shall do so," said Selvaggia, between her teeth; then, approaching Vanni, she continued, "Three of them you will bind here, just round the corner, so that they cannot see that other one. I will point him out to you, and you will secure

him here at the left, to that ring, between those two casks, do you understand?"

"I do."

"Now let's go for them," said Troilo and Selvaggia at the same moment, and the first added, "You and I are well paid, but there is one thing that I am a little curious about," said Troilo, stopping short, "I should like to-morrow to see what fine thing *you* have done. In the time of your forefathers, the women of the chosen people had ways of their own for killing Christians; witness, that lady who drove a nail through the ear of the captain who was sleeping in her tent."

"And I," answered Selvaggia, "am curious with regard to another matter; I should like to know, to-morrow, by what means you have been able to persuade that *beauty*, that *angel*, to fall in love with one like you."

"To tell you the truth, now that the good time has come, I find myself more embarrassed than I expected. 'With that cursed siege, and, living so long in the midst of Frati and arquebusades, I have forgotten how to begin to talk to a pretty girl. There is nothing worse than to be out of practice. And what can I say to her? Think how enraged she will be. How can I hope she will listen to my wooing? Well, we'll see. I'll make the experiment; at any rate, there will be no one to interfere with us here, and we have time before us. If she will be manageable, so much the better. In love affairs, violence spoils everything. But if she will not listen to reason — why then, she need not blame me, worse has happened to many others; for instance, you remember those ancestors of yours, of the tribe of Levi, and the wife of that priest, I mean Levite. Well, was not that woman in worse case?"

By this chit-chat, Troilo seemed disposed to gain a little delay, as he slowly, and with hesitating steps, crossed the courtyard.

On the point of showing himself unmasked, to this noble, elevated being, whom he had been accustomed to see venerated by all, and who, with one look, could make him feel ready to sink into the earth, he felt awkward and embarrassed, he even experienced a degree of consternation: however, retreat he could not. What would Selvaggia think of him? What would his friends say, who would sooner or later be apprized of the fact?

It was the destiny of this man, to be seduced and lured on to ruin, by the promptings of a wretched vanity. To gain time, and screw up his courage a little, he thought of a new expedient. Turning to the Sbiretto, he said:

"Listen, Vanni, I have just thought of something — this lady who is waiting out there — of course you understood — that she is not here of her own accord — I should not like to meet her so suddenly and abruptly — perhaps there is some woman — have not you a wife, for instance?"

"I had one, but the Priest came for her at Ceppo, a year ago, — and now there is nothing of the feminine gender here, but the key* of the door."

"There is no remedy," muttered Troilo between his teeth, then aloud:

"We can do without, now we will go."

He called Michele and said to him, "Conduct the lady hither; when she has alighted from her horse, show her into the room you see below at the extremity of the villa. Try to cheer her up, tell her to fear no harm, take the bandage from her eyes and leave her alone, and answer no questions she may put to you. When you come out, lock the door, and bring the key to me."

Selvaggia then turned to the Sbiretto and said, "Take the others below there, and secure them, according to my directions." Then, going out on the terrace before the hall-door, she pointed out Lamberto, saying, "*That* is the one you are to confine apart from the rest, between the two casks. However, wait until the lady is disposed of." Michele descended into the meadow, and taking Laudomia's horse by the bridle, led him before the hall-door, and in the most winning tones he could assume, said, "Lady, will you please to dismount, I am here to assist you."

"Oh! God, have pity upon me! upon us!" said the poor girl, solicitously obeying, to avoid being assisted. When she was on the ground, Michele took her by the hand, saying: "Fear nothing, no one will harm you, — come with me. Take care, there are four steps, now all is level — now you can walk freely."

He conducted her into the yellow room; in a few minutes he went out, locked the door, and gave the key to Troilo, saying: "She seems almost distracted, and if you do not find means to console her, you may lose her, for she may be like certain birds, that will not eat in a cage, but, in an hour or two, stretch their wings, and escape from their troubles."

Troilo did not reply, but he made the impatient gesture of one who hears something that annoys him.

The Sbiretto now came, leading the four prisoners; when

* Chiave (key) is feminine in Italian.

they were within, he closed the hall-door, and conducted them to their prison, according to orders. In a few moments, he re-appeared, and consigning the key to Selvaggia, said :

"It is done. Now, you wish them to have something to put into their stomachs, as you said? Let me run as far as my house." He went out. In a quarter of an hour, he returned with a basket, saying, "I am sorry to keep you waiting — but have patience. It is a long way off where I live." And, having carried the provision to the prisoners, he came to ask Troilo, if there was anything else he thought of.

"No," he replied, "go, and let me be called to-morrow morning at sunrise."

The Sbiretto wished them good night with a smile, and said, "Shut the door, and place the bar across, for in this country, they sow French beans and raise thieves." * Then he went away about his business, and the two who were left behind, having barred the hall-door, looked in each other's faces, and Troilo said, "If we are not safe here, we shall be nowhere." Drawing a long breath he added, "Here we are, Selvaggia, now let each one look to his own."

He proceeded to Laudomia's room, and she to the dungeon, with the key in one hand, and the bailiff's lantern in the other.

When she entered, Fanfulla, supposing it to be the jailer, cried out, "Oh! master, you have brought us something to eat, and have kept us with our hands tied. Did you think we could peck at it like pigeons?"

Selvaggia made no answer, but went straight on where Lamberto was sitting on the ground in silent despair, thinking of Laudomia, and praying God to protect her, since he himself could in no way aid or save her. Selvaggia, stopping directly before him, raised the lantern, so that the light fell full upon her face, then said: "It is I; do you recognize me, Lamberto?"

When Lamberto did recognize her, his heart sunk within him, all hope fled, he remembered what she was, how she had last left him, and with a pang of agony, he said in his heart, "My God, my God, Laudomia is in the hands of this mad woman!"

He dared not speak, not knowing what to say; and fearing to make things worse, he looked at her with an expression of intense anxiety.

* A form of expression indicating the excessive abundance of thieves in the country.

Selvaggia placed the lantern on the ground, and, crossing her arms upon her breast, as if to keep down its throbbings, which, despite the cuirasse, betrayed her agitation, said in a voice which pierced the very marrow of his bones :

“Do you remember, young man, how Selvaggia loved you, from the day she first knew you? Do you remember that night, on the banks of the Po, with what prayers, — and they were humble, Lamberto, — she asked of thee, not love, she did not esteem herself worthy of that, but a little compassion? Do you remember it? Did you grant her petition? No, you denied her! Was Selvaggia angry? Did she curse you? No. She blessed you, and went away, she importuned you no more, she thought, *I do not deserve so much*. But poor Selvaggia did not give up all hope. Without your knowing or suspecting it, she kept trace of you, she knew whither you went, she followed you, but she did not come near you, until that day of the battle, when she saw a pike aimed at your heart, and, had it sped, there had been no remedy! She received it in her own breast, and the cold steel, as it pierced her vitals, appeared to her delicious! You were saved, and she had ceased to suffer, so she then believed. Unhappy wretch! her sufferings had not even begun! Tumbled into the sea, dying in the hold of a galley, in the stench of a hospital, in the mire of the public street, feebly dragging herself along, mile after mile, in the rain, wind and cold, hungry and weary, and still on, on, still hoping, not for love, you know that — I told you so — for I am not so mad as you think me — not love, but pity — one word only, one look of compassion. At last, I arrived at Florence, I exerted every effort, I contrived a thousand ways to find you, suffered, waited — at last I found you — you know how I trembled, when I began to address you — you seemed to me like a God, and I felt myself so little, so humble; I was ready to throw myself under your feet — and you had the heart — you were not ashamed to *insult* me — how is it, that you were not ashamed?” And the poor girl, extending her hands towards Lamberto, remained some seconds, silent and motionless.

“You had done your worst. Had you killed me, I would have thanked you, would have blessed you — but you had despised, had scorned me, and I wished to show, that one may hate, may kill Selvaggia, but not despise her. I longed for vengeance, and I have sought it, I have passed days and nights in concerting means of obtaining it, and, at last, I have it! Laudomia is here, you are here — you all are in the power of Selvaggia, the courtesan, the refuse of the world, at

her, whom all trample under foot, whom all hate, who has never found one heart, not even that of a father, which would give her the least affection."

Here she drew her poniard from its sheath, as Lamberto supposed, to plant it in his heart, when, utterly overcome by her feelings, she broke out into a most desolate wail :

"And not even now, shall I obtain it ;" so saying, she cut the cords which bound Lamberto. "Not even thus, giving you life, liberty, and saving your loved Laudomia, shall I obtain that first prayer of mine, that you would love me as you do your horse, your hound !"

As she ended these words, with a voice no longer severe, but humble and supplicatory, Lamberto, loosed from his bonds, fell prostrate at her feet, and, impelled by gratitude, pity and admiration, exclaimed, in a broken voice :

"Redeeming angel !"

Selvaggia, tremulous with joy, raised her palms to heaven ; a pure, serene, wholly new expression appeared upon her face, and she said :

"God of mercy ! at last, Thou hast blest even me ! I thank Thee, that Thou hast created me !"

And she remained motionless, and in a state almost ecstatic, for a few moments, then, letting fall her uplifted arms, she added, as if speaking to herself, "I had suffered so much !"

Suddenly returning to herself, she said, quickly and resolutely, "Come, Lamberto, there is no time to be lost. Troilo has betrayed you all, he has the worst designs upon Laudomia, and is with her in this castle. There is no fear that we shall not arrive in time. He will not use force until pushed to extremity. Let us go and liberate the others, and then we will all rush to her rescue."

While she spoke, she went with Lamberto into the other part of the dungeon, where the remaining captives were confined, and began hurriedly to liberate them, while they, perplexed and uncertain what it all meant, knew not what to think, and now uttered thanks, and now interrogatories, in a confused and hurried manner, Lamberto rapidly cutting the cords, and saying, in breathless haste :

"You will see — you shall know all directly — it is an angel sent by God — quick, quick ! for that traitor must not escape us !"

He then told them of Troilo, of his designs, that he was here with Laudomia ; and they no sooner found themselves at liberty, *than they rushed altogether out of the dungeon, and, without thinking or heeding that they were wholly unarmed, they*

ran to tear him to pieces, with tooth and nail. But fortune had provided for them, for, passing through the antechamber, they spied the stand of arms, and each one helped himself, except Lamberto, who, without stopping for anything, had rushed together with Selvaggia to the door, which Troilo, feeling perfectly secure, had merely latched.

To push open the door, to rush upon Troilo, to seize him by the throat, to have him under his feet, was, for Lamberto, the work of a moment.

The traitor, at the moment of this unexpected entrance, was standing in the middle of the room, at some distance from Laudomia, who stood on the sill of the open trap-door, as if on the point of flinging herself down, and it was evident, that the wretch, having lost all hope of accomplishing his ends without force, had reduced the unhappy girl to this last and desperate defence.

The others quickly arrived, and Maurice, raising a short sword above the head of the fallen man, would have instantly dispatched him, had not Lamberto cried out :

“ Hold, Maurice ! ”

The servant suffered the blow to fall to the ground, and retreated, but in great indignation.

For several minutes no one uttered a word. The traitor, terrified and panting, the light of his eyes nearly quenched, and his face pale as death, was still stretched on the ground, held there by Bindo and Fanfulla, for Lamberto had left him, to hasten to Laudomia, who, white as a waxen statue, had fallen on her knees, raising her eyes in gratitude to heaven, and offering thanks in her silent soul, for voice she had none.

Lamberto kneeled beside her, and she flung herself upon his neck. She remained a moment thus, just on the verge of swooning, and Selvaggia, bringing her some wine from the table, she tasted it, and the color soon came back to her cheeks.

“ You are saved, my love ! ” said Lamberto, and the muscles of his face trembled from the fulness of his joy.

“ Oh ! let us go, for the love of God ! ” said Laudomia, with feeble voice, for the sight of the place and of Troilo, filled her with horror, and, rising with difficulty, aided by Lamberto and assisted also by Selvaggia, she dragged herself with tottering steps into the next room, where, sinking utterly spent into an easy chair, she laid her hands on the shoulders of Lamberto, who was at her feet, looking into his face with an expression of ineffable affection. Poor Selvaggia, a few steps behind, was about to withdraw, with what feelings the reader may imagine. Lamberto then said :

"Do you know who liberated me? It was *she* — *she* of whom I have talked to you — *she* who has so much heart. It was Selvaggia."

"Is it possible? Is this Selvaggia?" said Laudomia, with a shudder, and in a flash, her whole miserable history recurring to her mind, she thought of the anguish she must feel on thus witnessing this manifestation of their mutual love, and she quickly withdrew her arms, with an almost timid air, and clasping her hands in the attitude of prayer, she turned to her with an expression that implored pardon, as she said :

"Oh, Selvaggia! I could not know it was you!"

"Yes, it is I!" said Selvaggia, approaching, and her voice, her face, her attitude attested the fearful agitation of her whole heart. "It is I, who long cherished a horrible thought of vengeance against Lamberto, and against you, but I said to myself, What have you been seeking, unhappy wretch, for so many years? To find *one* who does not hate you, *one* who does not hold you in contempt. To find *one* heart that feels for you, if not love, at least kindness, to enjoy once before you die, only once, a friendly word, a friendly look. And do you hope to obtain it by this means? To obtain it by vengeance! You see what has been my vengeance! Tell me, can you feel for the unhappy one? May I hope for this once?"

Laudomia attempted to rise, and run to her arms, but her strength failed her, and she fell back into her seat, her arms still extended towards Selvaggia, who threw herself into them with a cry of joy, and the two women were enfolded in a long, loving embrace.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TROILO, meanwhile, was still on the ground ; too proud to ask for mercy, or descend to any act of humiliation, he awaited death in silence.

Fanfulla, and Maurice, most of all, felt their hands burn to be upon him. They were strongly disposed to give him a death-stroke, and make an end of him, and were only deterred from so doing by their respect for Lamberto, who had positively prohibited his servant from touching him. Maurice, however, could not resist saying, shaking his finger in the air, and pointing towards him, "Thank Messer Lamperto! if he were not my master, you should now be burning below, *mit der Teufel*."

Troilo, darting at him a glance of equal rage and contempt, then said, without looking at any one in particular :

"You've reason to boast of this exploit. Four against one, and to come upon one so secretly and by surprise—it is worthy of you—you know very well, that had you given me time to face you, eight like you, would not have been sufficient for me."

"Vile scoundrel!" cried Bindo, and, with a violent thrust, he pushed Fanfulla away, leaving Troilo free, "take your sword, and if I alone am not enough, you are no traitor!"

Troilo had not time to rise and grasp his sword-hilt, before Maurice and Fanfulla had him in their grasp.

"You are mad, Bindo," said this last, "to embroil yourself with this villain. No such thing shall take place where Fanfulla is."

At this moment, Lamberto entered; he had heard what had passed, and he said impetuously:

"Why not? Not with Bindo, but with me; for the blood of this villain is more necessary to me than the air I breathe. I would give my life for the privilege of cutting him in pieces; but I am no coward, like him, to wish to take advantage, or avail myself of a treacherous surprisal."

"I thought better of your judgment, Lamberto," said Fanfulla, drawing from its sheath the sword of Troilo, who was held

firmly by the arm, that he could not oppose Fanfulla's movement, then he added : " Would you defile that honored sword of yours, by measuring it with that of a traitor ? Rather than consent to such a thing, I would do service a second time on foot, I would break my neck as I break this blade."

And thrusting the point into the ground, and bearing his weight upon it, it flew into three pieces.

At this, Lamberto wholly lost his temper, and with face and eyes flashing with rage, he cried to Fanfulla, " You treat me most uncourtously, and by the Cross, I'll teach you better manners."

And, boiling with wrath, he tore his sword from its sheath. Fanfulla never stirred or changed countenance or color, or made any movement ; and at this moment Laudomia, supported by Selvaggia, appeared at the door, and cried out :

" Lamberto ! would you kill me ?" The young man stopped, and turning towards her, seemed humbled and confused.

" Touch not a hair of Troilo," continued Laudomia. " It is not I who command you, but God, by my mouth. He alone, knows the extent of his crime ; He alone, can render just retribution. I pardon Troilo, and if I pardon him, who should take vengeance upon him ? Let us go out, and quickly, too, from these unhappy walls. Let him remain shut up, so that he can do us no farther wrong, and then, God be thanked, we shall have nothing more to fear."

In the meantime, Lamberto had sheathed his sword, and approaching Laudomia, and taking her hand, he said : " Angel of heaven ! all shall be done exactly in accordance with your wishes, even if we one day have to repent of it."

Then, turning to Maurice, he said :

" Tie this fellow, with his hands behind his back, so that he cannot free himself, to the post of the bed, and then we will go. To-morrow, when people come in and untie him, we shall be far from here, and more than all, we shall know how to be on our guard against him."

Then, turning to Troilo, he remained a moment, as if about to say something to him, but, all at once, a shudder of disgust came over him, and he went out with Laudomia and the others, leaving the traitor bound in such a way that without aid, it was impossible for him to move.

They had no sooner reached the antechamber, than Lamberto approached Fanfulla, and smiling, and taking his hand, he said : " I was in the wrong, my brother, do not remain angry with me."

" I am never angry with a man who draws his sword to my

face, and you are incapable of doing otherwise; and, as to myself, when I was a young man, this blessed sword-hilt was between my claws at every half word. Well, let's think no more of it, though I like you all the better for it."

Amidst these tribulations, the hour of midnight had arrived. The hour was opportune for leaving these places without being seen or heard, and, consequently, without leaving any traces by which their route might be betrayed. Laudomia entreated them to go, and Selvaggia and Maurice, having found the stable, saddled the three horses, and led them out into the lawn before the villa.

When Laudomia attempted to move from the chair into which she had flung herself anew, her strength corresponded but ill to the intense desire she felt to flee from this fatal spot. If anything should excite surprise, it was, that she had been able to endure so much. But we often see persons of tender sex, or age, or of delicate physical structure, endure, almost miraculously, the most terrible trials, supported by an admirable presence of mind, and a tension of nerve, produced by some imminent peril or high-wrought passion. Let but the cause that produced this unnatural state be removed, and exhausted nature sinks, in proportion to the degree to which it was overtaxed.

So was it with poor Laudomia. Escaped from that terrible peril, finding herself safe and unharmed in friendly arms, safe with her betrothed and brother, she felt a deadly chill through all her frame, which still had in it something delightful, though her vital powers seemed rapidly sinking. That last act of interposition to bring Lamberto to himself, and persuade him to leave Troilo unharmed, had exhausted the little strength that was left to her. She was seized with a shivering which froze her through, with an anguish of heart which rendered its palpitations violent, irregular, and unequal, and her intellect became obscured and occupied with confused and painful imaginations.

"Oh! Lamberto," she said, beseechingly, as she strove in vain to rise, "my mind grows bewildered — my life is going. Oh! take me in your arms — carry me somewhere. Am I your betrothed? Is it true? Is it not a dream? Shall I die near you? Can you help me? Will you support my head? Oh! if I could remember — but my ideas are so confused. Did you give me the ring in San Marco? Is it not true?"

"Oh! yes, Laudomia, my love, take courage, we are betrothed, and you are with your betrothed. God and your father gave you to me, and I shall never leave you more."

"Oh! my father, tell me about him."

And the scene at Gavinana, the peril of Niccolò, came up before her, without her being able to distinguish, whether it were real, or only something to be feared, a fact that had occurred, or something threatened in the future.

"Oh! my Lamberto," she said, weeping, "tell me, if you know, if it is true that they will make him prisoner—or, perhaps, they have already taken him—he may be now in the hands of the sheriff—they will put him to torture—it may be now—perhaps, now, he is on the fatal scaffold! Oh! my father! my father! poor unhappy old man! Tell me, tell me, if you know!"

And she wept in torrents, and seemed so utterly disconsolate, that her tears would have moved the very stones to pity.

Lamberto, greatly distressed, made use of the strongest protestations, affirming, upon his honor, that he knew nothing of the matter, and endeavoring in a thousand ways and by manifold expressions to reassure her, and Bindo, with the impulsive affection of a kind hearted boy of fifteen, did the same, though his tearful eyes attested his anxiety, for he feared his sister's illness was more serious than it really was.

Maurice, who had come to give notice that the horses were ready, seeing his master in such trouble through Troilo's agency, could not be pacified, for having left him alive. The honest Swiss raved, and biting his thumb, he flung, from time to time, an angry glance out of the corners of his eyes to the door of the yellow room, where the traitor was bound, and shut up, saying to himself:

"I never drank wine mit Messer Droile! Ah! if mein master would say, 'Maurice to as you please mit him.'"

He continued to shake his head, for, according to his notions, no cause whatever, would allow him to harm a person with whom he had taken wine,—such was his reverence for that liquor. And, exactly for this reason, he could not be induced to taste it, on the evening of the reconciliation, for, though the others had pardoned Troilo, he, by an instinct of fidelity almost canine and we believe the epithet contains a eulogium, had remained implacable.

The anxiety which the state of Laudomia awakened in her friends, though great, was not sufficiently so, to induce them to delay here, and thus incur the risk of some unexpected obstacle to impede their flight.

As soon as she appeared a little quieted, and the cloud which had, for a short time, obscured her mind, was, in a measure, dissipated, Lamberto and his companions raised her in their

arms, placed her on her horse, and supporting her on both sides, took their way to the plain, under the guidance of Selvaggia. But whither to repair at this hour, amid suspicions, terrors, enemies, who perhaps surrounded them? Whither conduct that poor girl, who, at most, could travel but a few miles, and who was in sore need of shelter and repose?

Mount Murlo rose at a little distance. Lamberto and Bindo were acquainted with the parish priest there, and in years gone by, had sometimes come to visit him from Niccolò's villa, not far from Poggio a Cajano.

They decided to go to him by the most direct route. As they were well acquainted with the country, they were soon on the right track, in spite of the darkness, and encouraging Laudomia, they resolutely journeyed on.

But Selvaggia, who preceded them, all at once stopped, and striking her forehead with the palm of her hand, exclaimed:

"We have done well! Troilo's servant, Michele, is left in the villa — free — not one of us has thought of him, — God knows, he may have heard — may have seen all, — God knows if he has not already loosed his master, and very soon they may be upon us, with the men belonging to that knave of last evening!"

Fanfulla, without giving the others time, cried out, as he turned and walked off in the direction they had just come, "I'll attend to that, never fear."

And Maurice, without asking Lamberto's permission, ran after him as fast as his legs could carry him.

The others remained in doubt a moment, not knowing what to do, then reflecting, that two were sufficient for this new undertaking, and unwilling to weaken too much the escort of Laudomia, they continued their way towards Monte Murlo.

While Fanfulla and Maurice were hurrying back over the rising ground, now running, and now keeping up a brisk walk, according as the road was rough or otherwise, an idea occurred to Maurice, which appeared to him truly excellent and admirable, and, determined to sound his comrade, he began to say, puffing and panting from his exertions:

"Ah! mein master is too good — too much pity — for that villain — traitor — ought to have left him hanged, not tied — then we should not have to turn back — need'nt be afraid. And so I would have done, if it was left to me — and not so many pardons — but it was — Madonna — Oh! the women have hearts without skin. 'Twas because — mein master had trunk — but Maurice, the rogue — he would never think *was* mit Messer Droile — and he could manage everything if *Mess* Fanfulle was only willing."

Fanfulla understood very little of this subtle distinction between *trinking* and not *trinking*, — he heard the words as he was running, but he was thinking of other things, so he returned no answer, and they thus reached the villa.

They found the gate open, just as they had left it. In four leaps, they had reached the hall door, which did not appear to have been moved, and was still closed. They entered, and stopped, all breathless as they were, to listen, when they heard Troilo calling Michele in tones which made the vault of the castle ring, and between each call, he sent forth in a tone less loud, the most horrible imprecations, cursing heaven and hell, and the hour that he was born.

"Hear him rave," said Fanfulla, laughing, "for since we went out, not a cobweb has been stirred in the house — and now we are here ourselves, and no harm done. Thank God, that poltroon of a Michele must have lain down to sleep in some of those chambers above — and, luckily, he drank so heavily last evening, he must sleep very soundly, and his master will have plenty of time to howl there — he will not hear him, that's a clear case. Now, first of all, we'll lock the hall-door, so that we may not be caught searching the villa." And he locked it as he spoke.

"Now let's go and look for him," he added, but Maurice seized him by the arm, and with a mingled expression of stupidity and cunning, said :

"Dear Fanfulle, I've thought of something ; if Messer Droilo come out of this place, he can do much harm to mein master, now those ugly Pallesche have the victory. We'll hang Messer Droile, as they do the ugly beasts, and let poor Michele go, he can do no harm."

Fanfulla burst into a laugh, and answered :

"Certainly, there is no better plan than that, I did not think you had so much ingenuity. But to tell you the truth, I never was a hangman yet, and I don't intend to begin the business now."

"In mein country, dear Fanfulle, they think very different. An executioner there, after cutting off one hundred heads, becomes a nobleman."

"That is a most beautiful law, but it is not in force with us, and besides, I should not be disposed to turn nobleman on those terms."

"Dear Fanfulle, only stay here, — you need not help. Let Maurice alone — but promise to say nothing to mein master — if he should know, poor Maurice !"

Fanfulla hesitated some moments : he could not make w

his mind to consent to a thing so repugnant to his feelings; on the other hand, he thought how much the wretch deserved death, and still more of the danger of leaving him alive, now that to the will to do harm, the Palleschi, by their recent victory, (as Maurice had well said,) had added the power. At last he said to himself, "One traitor less, is small harm, — provided I don't put my hands into the business," and mounting the staircase, sword in hand, to go in search of Michele, he said to Maurice:

"Well, I am going to unearth this other one, you may do what you choose. I don't wish to know anything about the matter, — I shall not know anything about it, — and I do not say, yes or no."

He took the lantern which had been forgotten, and was still burning on one of the steps, and continued to ascend the stairs, whistling beneath his moustache, actually pleased, that there was one man to be found, who, without being deterred by the degrading nature of the undertaking, would relieve the world from so much foulness, and thus liberate the oppressed Lapi family from their relentless persecutor.

Maurice, fully satisfied to be permitted to avenge his master, and remove this mote from his eyes, proceeded forthwith to the chamber where Troilo was still storming with rage, and stringing together oaths enough to bring down the chimney-caps. When he heard some one touch the latch, he supposed it to be Michele, and still foaming with rage, he exclaimed: "You are come at last, hang-dog villain! Set me free from this place, for I have to —"

But the door opened, and instead of Michele, he saw the Swiss enter with an expression on his face, that made the very blood chill in his veins. Maurice, also, though moved by a very different cause, felt a shudder of horror at the sight of Troilo.

Consternation, rage, the long writhing struggle to disengage himself, and his continued and desperate cries, had reduced him to such a state, that he resembled a wild beast more than a human being. If any one had wished to represent a soul condemned to everlasting torments, he need have depicted it no otherwise: his face, disfigured, fiery red, almost purple, moist with sweat, with foam, with passionate tears, was enough to inspire horror, and Maurice was assailed with such a loathing, mingled with detestation, that he proposed to make way with him as soon as possible.

Seeing the trap-door, which still remained wide open, a new plan occurred to him. He went straight to the aperture, and

the rope and was convinced of the immense depth of the shaft. He took hold of the cord, and began to draw it up, he pulled and pulled, there seemed to be no end. Troilo, meantime, seized with a trembling, with an indescribable horror, in view of what was preparing for him, had begun to beg, conjure and promise; he had thrown himself upon his knees, as much as the cords would allow, then, actually beside himself for terror, uttered things horrible, incoherent, and without meaning; he howled, he roared, while Maurice, continuing to draw up the rope, merely said:

"Messer Droile, make an act of contrition — you deserve to die in water —"

At last, the end of the rope appeared, to which was attached a well-hook, rusty and foul with slime. Troilo, now utterly spent, fell flat on his face, but unluckily for him, though his strength failed him, his senses did not.

Maurice, then, quickly for he wished to make an end of the business, and so do we, bound him under the arm-pits with the rope attached to the well-like opening, cut that which secured him to the bed, and, taking him in his arms, bore him to the hole, which was sufficiently large to receive him.

The unhappy wretch struggled, and strove to aid himself, but all in vain, and, suspended to the cord, which now ran swiftly through the hands of Maurice, fell into the immense depth below. After the lapse of a few seconds, the cord had reached its limit, Maurice then detached it from the pulley, and threw it down, threw down also Troilo's cap, which had been left on the floor, then closed the doors of the mysterious aperture, and returning into the court-yard to wait for Fanfulla, fell upon his knees, and with all possible devotion, began to say a *Miserere* for the soul of Troilo, who, probably, had not met death so speedily in those realms below, that he had no time to make some reflections, the nature of which, we will spare the imaginations of our readers.

The hypothesis of Fanfulla, with regard to Troilo's servant, proved to be correct. Thoroughly wearied with the vigils and dissipations of the last few days and nights, he had sought out a distant room in the upper story, and stretching himself upon a bed, had sunk into a sleep, from which cannonades would not have roused him.

Fanfulla, on arriving at the head of the staircase, heard his deep snoring in the distance, and, guided by the sound, soon succeeded in finding him.

He was upon him before he awoke, and seizing him by the throat, Michele opened his astonished eyes, and the first object

that presented itself, was the point of a sword, directed at the pit of his stomach. There was nothing to be done, so without movement or opposition, he begged for his life, which was granted, on condition that he should follow, or rather, precede his vanquisher, who, following close at his heels, made him descend into the court-yard.

"What are you doing here, on your knees?" said Fanfulla, greatly astonished to see Maurice so occupied at such a moment.

"I am performing a little devotion for the soul of poor Messer Droile," said the serving man, in an under tone, so as not to be heard by Michele.

"Well, it cannot be denied that you have a good heart. Now, then, let us begone."

And, having tied Michele's hands with a rope, which he also wound around one of his legs, so that he could not run away, they set off, taking the most direct route to Monte Murlo.

"Well, how did things work?" demanded Fanfulla, who was dying of curiosity, to know what end the wretch had made.

"I will tell you, dear Fanfulle, but first, swear never to speak of it to mein master—pity you're not a *gentleman*, then I could demand the oath of a *gentleman*—"

"Never heed that, brother, for were I one, it would be better to give you the word of an honest man—for of gentlemen, there have been many, who have broken their oaths, but of honest men, not one,—and I, as such, give you my word, that I will not tell it to living soul."

"I am sure of it, good Fanfulle, Messer Droile is not *hanged*. I thought to save *der Teufel* a journey, and so sent him, down, down, down, then I threw down the cap too, so to-morrow, when any one comes, he will not be found, and they will think he has gone away—and no one will suspect anything."

"That was not a bad idea," thought Fanfulla, and hastening along at a rapid pace, they soon arrived at the vicarage of Monte Murlo, where their companions had already taken shelter, and where Laudomia, whose illness had greatly increased on the way thither, had, at least, found a bed on which she could stretch her weary limbs, and where she had received all the attentions of a cordial and zealous hospitality.

But to speak more fully of the misfortunes which befell the Lapi family, we must return to Niccolò, whom we left on his way to Florence.

Poor Florence! we endeavored to describe the sorrows which

oppressed one of her families, but think of the thousand others who suffered equal, and, perhaps, greater woes! How many wives left widows! How many children, orphans and desolate! How many aged people, deprived of their children, left to drag out their last days in solitude and in tears! How many strong and generous minds, enfeebled by the protracted miseries of exile, perished in unmerited oblivion!

Think, then, what noxious growth must vegetate among those ruins! What poisonous fruits must succeeding generations bring forth, who are born and die unhonored, beneath their pestilential shade!

But there is one thing we should remember, and which will console us for so many wrongs, will show us that the sufferings of a whole people are not thrown away, but made to subserve the designs of a gracious Providence. They served to establish firmly the reign of Charles V. in Italy, to secure to him the possession of Lombardy, which thus, for two hundred years, could sleep in peace in the arms of Spain. They served to procure to the Neapolitans, for the same space of time, the just and friendly guardianship of a Spanish Vice-Royalty.

They brought about a state of things, in which the Imperial soldiers might, without fear of snare, accept an invitation to dine at the tables of the French, at the expense of citizens and peasants in Provence, and the Sciampagna.

They served, in short, many good and useful purposes, which, could they have been foreseen by the Florentines, would, it may be supposed, have consoled them, but, unfortunately, they were not prophets.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE clocks had already sounded the fourth hour of the night, when Niccolò, surrounded by his escort, stopped before the closed portals of the Porta al Prato.

The sentinel on guard upon the tower, called out the "Who goes there?" in German, and, in the same tongue, he called his captain, who, having descended where the soldier was, commenced a dialogue, in broken Italian, with Messer Benedetto, and, at length, after much difficulty, succeeded in comprehending that this was the party, for whom, by order of Malatesta, he was to open the gate, at whatever hour it might arrive.

After a little delay, the gate was slowly opened, the company entered, and, passing through the midst of the lansquenets, took their way towards the borgo Ognissanti.

This was the first time in a life of ninety years, that Niccolò had ever heard soldiers on guard at the gates, speaking in an unknown and barbarous tongue! Had his hands been free, his ears would not have received that sound, for it made him shrink with that feeling of bitterness, which causes the slave to wince at an unexpected and painful wrench at his chains.

They passed on through dark, silent, deserted streets, which gave to Florence the aspect, perhaps, of the Necropolis of the Egyptians, the city of tombs, and, arrived in the piazza, or public square, Niccolò could see the doors of the Palagio, its steps, the halls where the affairs of the Republic were formerly adjusted, encumbered with foreign soldiers, who were now sunk in sleep. This beastly crew of Spaniards and Germans were lustily snoring, as they lay upon the ground, in a thousand strange and varied positions.

The noise of the horses' feet did not awaken them, and the company crossed the piazza. Then, through Condotta and Badia, they were finally conducted to the door of the prison.

Here, they were obliged to arouse the people within. A stir was soon heard among the guard of watchmen, placed near the entrance, then the drawing of bolts, and, finally, the creaking of the hinges, on which the massive doors turned in opening.

Niccolò having dismounted, was led in and consigned to the sheriff, who had come in person to receive him, after which ceremony, Messer Benedetto and the escort went away, the gates were closed again, and the bolts secured.

Niccolò looked about him, and not seeing any of the others who had been made prisoners with him, felt partially consoled by this circumstance. Thoughts of his daughters, however, arose in his mind, together with a desire to know what had become of them, and he earnestly inquired their fate from those around him, but no one replied. The poor old man then knew with whom he had to do, and he did not repeat the question.

This old and venerated citizen of the republic, one of the most noble and generous spirits of Florence, now found himself under subjection to that impure and degraded race, always alike, in all ages and under all jurisdictions, for whom, to imprison men, to torment them, and, at last, to deliver them into the hands of the executioner, is one mode, and sometimes the best within their means, of gaining their bread. To them, whoever has placed his foot on the threshold of the dungeon, whether guilty or innocent, whether a hardened assassin or an involuntary homicide, whether he has a murder upon his conscience, or is pure from every crime, to them, I repeat, it is one and the same thing. He is a prisoner, and that is all they think of. Let him laugh or weep, despair or resign himself, it imports little to them. Does it occur to the mastiff, when loosed by the butcher, to stop the runaway bullock, to feel pity for his victim, as he grasps him by the ear with his teeth? However, even these men, for whom the incapability of feeling compassion, is, I was about to say, a necessary condition of existence, felt moved at the sight of the august old man, and if they did not actually feel pity, it was, at least, astonishment, that papal vengeance should reach so far.

"It was hardly worth while, to take so much trouble to put this bird into a cage—he couldn't fly far at any rate," said one of the men.

In the meantime, he diligently searched Niccolò's person, in order to take his weapons from him, if he had any. Then, groping in his pockets, he took out what little money was there, and handed it to the sheriff. The sheriff's clerk noted in his register the name of the prisoner, and the time of his incarceration; they then began to mount the staircase on the outside of the prison, which is still to be seen, on the left hand side of the court-yard. If Niccolò, in going up these stairs, had cast a look below, he would have seen, in the centre of this space, a square, massy block, across which the axe was laid, th

plaster of the pavements stained with large dark spots, on which glittered the reflected rays from a smoking torch, carried by the turnkey who preceded him, and he might, perhaps, have guessed whose blood that was, which the dogs were now at liberty to lick, and which, but a few hours before, was coursing in the veins of the last Gonfaloniere of the Republic. But the horrid sight did not meet the eye of Niccolò; he was looking upwards, now, upon the Marzocco (sculptured lion), which adorns the parapet of the great staircase, now, on the walls, and the sculptured shields with which they were covered; and thinking of the valiant men to whom they had belonged, and of the ancient grandeur of Florence, he felt fortified anew, in mind and body, and he resolved to render to his native city, the last homage remaining in his power, by showing himself, in this extremity, truly worthy of being her son.

He continued to mount, then, with a weary but not vacillating step; his brow was serious, but serene and resolute, and having reached the upper landing, he was conducted through a long corridor to a low, narrow door, through which, as the turnkey opened it, he was obliged to enter stooping. It was a cell about eight paces square, where, from a hole in the roof, a few rays of light gained entrance between the bars of a strong iron grating. It contained a wretched bed, composed of a large sack filled with crumpled straw, which still retained the impress of its previous occupant.

There was a pitcher on the floor. "See if there's water in it," said the jailer to one of his men.

The man looked, and answered, "It is full. Carduccio could not have been thirsty, for he has not touched it."

Niccolò started at this name, and inquired anxiously, "He was here, then?"

"Here."

"And where have they put him now?"

"Where the day of judgment will find him."

The men went out, closing the cell with a great noise of keys and bolts, and leaving the old man in darkness. Standing as he was, in the centre of the dungeon, he raised his arms in attitude of prayer, saying, "Oh, Francesco! thou hast completed thy sacrifice! God grant that thy brave soul may rest in peace."

Then groping around, he found the bed, and sat down upon it, took up the pitcher, and drank a few mouthfuls, and determined to seek repose in sleep, if possible, in order to do all in his power, to regain a little strength.

"May this my body, this worn-out instrument, not put me

to shame in the hour of trial! Aid me, Lord, in the trials that are preparing for me! Thou seest my soul, Thou seest the state to which these afflicted limbs are brought: infuse into them vigor sufficient to conduct them without one act of pusillanimity, through the few steps that separate them from the tomb."

He extended himself upon the pallet, laid down his head, and composing himself to sleep, remained motionless, hoping to court sleep, but how was it possible, that a mind overflowing with so many thoughts, a heart so full of suffering, could lull itself to rest? The assurance of a pure conscience is not always sufficient to ensure peaceful slumbers, and midnight vigils are not always the result of remorse alone. How was it possible, that, finding himself now at the end of a long and laborious life, chequered with reverses, and spent in an ardent anxiety for his country's weal, there should not come up before him in long array, all the events of so many years, the baffled designs, the inconsiderate counsels, all the circumstances, in short, through which Florence had at last, after so many efforts, so much agitation and bloodshed, fallen into the clutch of the Medici, and he himself brought to what —? To make the last and useless sacrifice of a few hours of life! and this was all, that those struggles, those losses, those misfortunes had obtained from the Eternal Justice! This Justice had permitted the wicked to triumph over the good, notwithstanding the imperturbable constancy with which the latter had fought, had suffered, had prayed; notwithstanding the prophecies of Fra Girolamo his prophet! "What an inscrutable decree!" thought the afflicted old man, "What an inscrutable mystery of the wrath of God! And what, oh! God, was our aim?" he thought, in the bitterness of his heart, "what were our most ardent desires? Were they not to establish Thy kingdom? To add glory to Thy name? To save the country from the hands of Thy enemies? From those, who, to plant their feet firmly on the neck of this people, had no other way, than to corrupt them, to sink them in vice? Oh! how much I have suffered! How much I have prayed! Thou knowest, oh! God, what what sincerity I gave Thee the lives of my sons! With what joy would I have given Thee, that of the last who remains to me! With what joy would I have looked upon the final destruction of my whole household! But Florence — my God! why hast Thou not saved Florence?"

Without his being aware of it, and in spite of his iron constitution, which could not but be shaken by watching, fatigue, and mental agitation, these painful thoughts, *coming in his mind*, were bringing him to a series of reflections still *more dark and desolate*, to a state of mind which was actually *caused by the utter exhaustion of his vital forces*.

His faith in the justice and goodness of God, his faith in the prophecies of Fra Girolamo, which, like a ray of celestial light, had for so many years been his guide and consolation, he now saw grow dim and vanish in a dark mist, filled with doubts and fears. "What if I have been deceived, in all that I hoped, all that I have believed for ninety years?"

This fearful doubt arose in that over-wrought heart, just when he had the greatest need of finding in that faith the arguments and comforts of an unfailing trust; he felt a chill through his very bones, at seeing escape from his grasp, the last thread to which he could cling; he shuddered, like one who, suspended over a deep abyss, hears the stout branch to which he is clinging, crack and give way above his grasp, or like one, who, in a ship driven by winds and waves close to a rocky shore, witnesses the parting of the cable, the last hope of safety.

An agonizing groan burst from the breast of Niccolò, notwithstanding his efforts to shut the door of his heart to thoughts of desperation, which he felt were entering there, terrible and ruinous, as the enemy pour into a fortress which has withstood a long siege, and fought desperately, but in vain. For the first time in ninety years, he knew what terror was. It seemed to him that the hopes of a whole life, in this world and the next, were suddenly shaken to their foundations, and, seeking in vain, in the present and in the future, for one feeling that was not fraught with pain, one thought that was not dark and uncertain, he rose from his seat upon the bed, and cried, "*Deus meus quare dereliquisti me?*"

It was the destiny of Niccolò, to serve as an example of the extremity, to which the human soul may be reduced by misfortune, and yet obtain the victory. With that tremendous force of will, which had always been his most striking attribute, he strove to expel these thoughts, and he did expel them; he strove to summon those of an entirely opposite nature, and they came at his bidding. He called in his unbridled thoughts, and he said in his heart, "Who am I, that I should judge that Being who made me, and all men, the heaven, the earth and the whole universe? What impious madness, to say that he cannot, or will not occupy himself with every one, even the least of his creatures, to weigh their merits or their sins, their joys or sorrows, because He is too great, to descend so low? Would not that be to limit His power, to reduce Him to our own measure? Are not all creatures equally atoms? Are they not as nothing before his immensity? Does it cost Him more, to make the sun and stars revolve in the firmament

than to give form and motion to the smallest insect? Oh! great God, since Thou hast created me, continue, then, Thy care of me! Succor this immortal soul, which now is needy, and willing to return whither Thou shalt lead it! Pardon the doubts of this intellect, which is also Thy creation! Thou hast not given me the power to understand Thee, but I feel that in my heart Thou hast placed, as a compensation for all my woes, virtue sufficient, to lead me to trust in Thee, and in Thy mercies. Yes, my God, I do hope: I confide in Thy goodness, I throw myself in Thy arms, into Thy paternal bosom, where I shall, perhaps, one day, learn why I had to suffer so much on earth."

Hope, celestial friend of the afflicted, descended thus into the heart of the poor old man, and diffused there, a sweet feeling of peace, a quiet serenity, by which he felt completely revived. He seemed to be transported to a lofty region, far removed from the miseries of our world, to be loosed henceforth from its passions and its cares, and to be wholly absorbed in the ideas of a better life. These thoughts, without losing anything of their charm, became gradually confused, acquiring something of the fantastic and imaginary: for the weary old man was at last asleep, and he seemed to see before him three figures, three human forms, bare-footed, and dressed in monkish garb, who smiled upon him, and seemed to be rejoicing amid brilliant flames of fire, which, surrounding them on all sides, darted their bright vermilion rays in every direction. The figure in the midst began to speak to him, but his words were a kind of melody unlike every earthly tongue, and utterly incomprehensible to Niccolò, who, recognizing Fra Girolamo, seemed to prostrate himself before him, exclaiming:

"Oh! most holy of all martyrs, permit thy servant to understand what thou sayest!" It then seemed to Niccolò that the Frat's, changing voice and language, said these words:

"Did you expect to understand the mysteries of God? Adore them, and hope. My prophecies will be fulfilled. *Florentia post flagella renovabitur*. But you cannot know what the scourge is, nor how long it is to endure — *sic dicit Dominus* — generations and centuries will pass away, then, there will be new light and a new earth, and that country which we have both loved so much, shall rise up free and regenerated."

The flames, the martyrs, the vision, all disappeared, and Niccolò awoke, and, esteeming as a divine vision, that dream, which, by a supernatural appearance, had brought back to him again those ideas which had always been fixed in his heart, he felt glow more warmly than ever, that ardent love of country, that unshaken faith, which had been the soul of his life, and which, in death, was to be his only consolation.

God, who never abandons him who deserves it not, had sent aid to him, just when his need was the sorest. A noise of people, and the turning of keys was heard in the adjoining corridor; the door of the cell was reopened, and a beadle entered, bearing a torch, then other constables belonging to the retinue of the sheriff; they commanded the old man to rise and follow them. He obeyed; and, taking him in their midst, they went out, and, after a long circuit, through corridors and staircases, they came to the door of a hall, where that most execrable tribunal held its sittings, — not to render justice, but to doom to death all the enemies of the new state, investing its doings with the mockery of the forms of justice.

It was a large, square, lofty room; on the walls in front, was painted a historical representation by the hand of Giotto, abounding in figures of saints, under which figures, the painter had portrayed many of the most illustrious citizens of their time, among others, Corso, Donati, Brunetto Latino, and Dante Alighieri.

Under Pietro Leopoldo, this painting was covered with a coat of lime. At our day, the nails of prisoners having scratched away this coating, have revealed the picture here and there. We hope that it will be uncovered entirely, and that this place, so filled with honorable remembrances, will be rendered less loathsome than it now is.

Under the picture, was a settee, or bench, on which were seated eight judges, dressed in purple robes, and before them a large, long table, on which were registers, writings, an inkstand and a small parcel, and in four candlesticks burned as many lighted candles, for the first gleam of day had not yet appeared, and through two long, narrow windows, placed high above the floor, on the right of the entrance, and left open on account of the heat, the stars were seen to sparkle through the bars of the iron grating.

Near the door, mace-bearers, beadles, witnesses and summoners were talking among themselves. In one corner of the room, a beam projected from the wall, with a pulley at its extremity, and the cord of torture. An image of Our Lady, painted on the opposite wall, with a lamp burning before it, might perhaps comfort the victim, as he fixed his eyes upon it, or was placed there from the old habit which men have, of using things divine to sanction deeds of villany.

When the old man entered, a low whispering arose between the knaves in the door-way. Several were reposing, stretched along the wall; for in these times, the tribunal never adjourned for a moment. One of these, stretching and yawning, said wearily, "When shall we see the last of these bores? so that we can go home and go to sleep."

Niccolò came forward, and stopped, a couple of paces from the table. Whatever he might have felt, on appearing in the presence of the enemies of his country, he was careful to sustain her honor in his deportment, and his words; he stood as erect as possible, and turning a look, not arrogant, but certainly fearless, upon his judges, not one of them could meet it, but either cast down his eyes or turned away.

These men had been chosen from among the passionate admirers of the Medici, or, rather, from that ancient and villanous race, which, since the world stood, have ever been found ready to lend their baseness to the service of the conquering party.

Among them was Baccio Valori, (God bless thy hands Cosimo de' Medici!) there was also Messer Benedetto de' Nobili; of the others, it will not be necessary to speak.

The President, turning to the accused, interrogated him: "Your name, country and age?" And Niccolò answered with a firm voice:

"Niccolò, son of Messer Cione de' Lapi, of the Popolo of San Giovanni, Gonfaloniere of the Lion of Gold, ninety years of age."

"Messer Benedetto, read the accusation."

Il Nobili rose, and taking a paper from the table, read in tones of pretended compunction the following words:

"In nomine D. J. C. ac Beatiss. V. Mariæ. Amen." (And the hypocrite bowed his head almost down to the table before him). "On the — day of August, 1530, appeared, before the chosen *Otto di Balìa* (the Eight in authority) of the city and republic of Florence, Niccolò di Cione de' Lapi, accused by the undersigned witnesses of having:

1st. Stirred up and excited the people with frauds and machinations, to the injury and scandal of this state, interfering *clam, seu palam*, in the deliberations and proceedings of the magistrates, to prevent the said city and republic from acceding to the just and reasonable conditions demanded by His Holiness, Pope Clement VII., of the most illustrious house of the Medici, and the Pallescan citizens, who have been outlawed since 1527; and of having been the principal cause of prolonging the war to the great detriment of the city and country.

2d Item. Of having counselled and favored the proposition to despoil the churches, chapels, sacred palaces and oratories, of their gold, silver, gems and sacred vessels, contrary to the express prohibition of His Holiness, and the great injury of the clergy, the convents, and the Holy Catholic Church, to sustain the expenses of the war and abominable rebellion, contrary to the ancient laws and ordinances of the republic of Florence, and the Romish church.

3d Item. Of having counselled and encouraged many bad men, to rob, burn and destroy the villas of Carreggi, and other houses belonging to the most illustrious family of the Medici, and to insult,

and cut to pieces Pope Clement at Servi,* and other acts of insolence.

4th Item. Of having kept up in his house, his impious and sacrilegious worship to the memory of Frate Hieronimo Savonarola, burnt in the Piazza di Palagio, as an obstinate heretic, and excommunicated by His Holiness, Pope Alexander VI., as appears from the robe and ashes of the said Frate, which are present at this accusation, and which were had in veneration by the said Niccolò, and kept in his house, in his own bedchamber, for the purpose of performing his devotions to them, to the scandal of his family, of good Christians, and in disobedience to the Holy Romish Church. Which accusations, the accusers, having been admonished to speak the truth, and having taken oath of it upon the Sacred Gospels, are signed by the following witnesses: " (And here he read a string of names of the very lowest of the populace, all followed by a cross, because none of them knew how to write, then he added :) " For which, and for other offences and evil doings, which are here omitted, but which can be demonstrated on occasion, the noble gentlemen of the Otto di Balìa, of the republic and city of Florence, demand that justice shall be done upon the said Niccolò of Messer Cione de' Lapi, with condemnation to the penalty of traitors to the country, for the protection of good citizens, and of the laws, and as an example to the wicked and rebellious. Ad Dei Gloria. Amen."

During the reading, a bitter smile passed more than once, over the lips of the old man; when it was ended, the President said:

" Niccolò, you have heard; confess, or will you speak in your defence?"

" In my defence?" answered the old man with a smile, " I would not waste words or breath, in such a cause. Do I not know you? Do I not know, who has employed you in this office? — who has caused me to be seized, and carried away prisoner, contrary to the capitulations of the surrender, which promised to protect the lives and liberty of the citizens. Did you suppose, I should think of defending myself? No, I speak not to save my head; let it fall, and would to God, it had fallen long ago! I should not then have witnessed the ruin of this holy and most unhappy country, nor should I have been the unwilling spectator of so much treachery, and of such dastardly deeds."

" But I speak, for the honor of Florence, because, always, so long as my tongue and my breath are free, so long as I shall be left alive, I will not hear this betrayed people calumniated and vituperated, without raising a cry in its defence. I have

* There was at Servi an image of Pope Clement hanging to the vault like those we found at the *bucca* of San Antonio. Some young men cut it in pieces.

never excited or stirred up this people with machinations, nor have I disturbed their deliberations or proceedings; but at home, in church, in the public squares, everywhere, openly and in the most undisguised manner (as Niccolò always has spoken) have I counselled them to the defence of their liberty, and I make this my boast, for Florence always has been a free city by her own right, and it is the Medici and their coadjutors, who have sought to subdue her with frauds and machinations, and if they were driven away, it was because they deserved it; and now they have returned with armed hands to trample her under foot, and God has permitted it for our sins, but the infamy of being traitors to the country will eternally rest, not on us, but upon them.

“The gold and silver of the churches were used, and we had authoritative power to use them, from the Pope himself, who conceded it to us, previous to the year '27, in defence of the Medicean State. Either it is not lawful to appropriate these treasures to a profane use, and place them at the discretion of the laity, or it is lawful, and they were holily employed in alleviating the miseries, and saving the lives of thousands of innocents, who were dying of hunger.

“Of the burning of Carreggi, I have nothing to say; that would only be to speak in my own defence, and I care not to defend myself.

“But I do speak, and protest, in the face of God, and of the world, against the blasphemous calumnies I have had to hear against the holy martyr, Fra Girolamo Savonarola. It was not enough, that you caused his death, that you dispersed and threw into the Arno his ashes, but you must load his memory with reproach! Did you suppose, that the ribaldry, the frauds, the false accusations, with which, you Palleschi, procured his ruin, the reproach, which you brought upon his virtues and his holy exhortations, were not openly known to the world? — that every one did not know, how false was his trial? How Ser Ceccone, the notary, who was the instrument of these abominations, died despairing, under the just chastisement of God? And can an excommunication, founded on such calumnies, have any place? I lent to the relics of the holy martyr, no unfitting worship, but kept them in my house, with that respect, which was due to the ashes of a saint, proved to be such, by miracles performed in life and after death.”

Messer Benedetto, at these words, untied the parcel which was upon the table, drew from it the robe and the purse of silk wrought with gold, which held the ashes, and, showing them to Niccolò, said:

"It is sufficient, that you acknowledge these things to be yours, and the same which you kept in your chamber in a niche, with a lamp burning before them; we, ourselves very well know what is to be inferred from this worship, and also as to the validity of the excommunication."

"Yes, I acknowledge them; they are mine," said Niccolò, taking them, and kissing them with an impetuous burst of affection, "and I thank God for granting me the opportunity, openly to confess His prophet before you, His enemies, — of confessing my country before you, who have assassinated and betrayed her! What am I, poor old man, to deserve to die in a cause so sacred and honorable? Now do your worst, triumph *potestus tenebrarum*, but know, that Niccolò alone, unarmed, a prisoner in your midst, has compassion on you, and that the day will come, when you will have reason to envy him. I speak to you, Baccio Valori!"

Raising his voice, and extending his hand towards Baccio, he repeated:

"I speak to you! The day will come when the death of Niccolò shall excite your envy! Not that I invoke any evil upon you for what you have done to me, for I freely pardon you, but God does not pardon him who does to his country what you have done!"

"Come," said Baccio, cutting short his further speech, and giving a sign to the assistants, "is this his respect for a magistrate?" And the President also nodding to his ministers, said:

"Since he will not take the only proper course, and in addition to that, openly insults the magistrate, he must be put to the torture. You have no one to blame but yourself, Niccolò! Chancellor, write out the examination."

Several *birri* threw themselves upon Niccolò, and dragged him violently towards the hideous instrument, we have already mentioned, tore off his *lucco* and *capuche*, and threw him on the ground, where the venerable old man remained in his shirt and trowsers. The silver crucifix, which he had taken from the head of the bed, at his departure from his home, and which had belonged to Madonna Fiori, his wife, hung at his breast, and drew the eyes of these brigands, who quickly snatched it from him. At this act, a groan of anguish escaped from Niccolò's breast, but he raised his eyes to heaven, with a look of resignation, and his lips murmured a few syllables of prayer, and, perhaps, of pardon.

In the meantime, the ministers of the executioner, in dark, red doublets and breeches, with their sleeves rolled up to the

elbows, had pushed the old man under the pulley, and tied his wrists tightly together, behind his back, with the cord which hung from it. Three of them then took hold of the opposite end, awaited with a look of stupid indifference, the signal to commence, while Niccolò, lifting up his soul to God, and imploring the intercession of Fra Girolamo, said :

" Oh ! thou who hast suffered so much for the fulfilment of justice, help me to endure this lesser trial, for the glory of God, and the honor of this poor country."

Messer Benedetto, in the meantime, rising from his seat, approached the victim, and placed himself directly in front of him, beside a small table, where the chancellor was seated with a sheet of paper before him, and pen in hand, waiting to write down the confession.

Many painters, in representing the martyrdom of a saint, have endeavored to render the scene more touching and striking by the strong contrast between the hideous faces of the executioners, and the heavenly countenance of the martyr, but the imagination of not one of them, has ever been able to reach what was here actually represented. The face of Niccolò, which from its extreme pallor, was almost of a color with his snowy locks and beard, illuminated by the lamp of the Madonna over his head, would have had the appearance of marble or alabaster, and might have seemed the face of a prophet, sculptured by Michael Angelo, only that his dark eyes, raised to heaven, gave life to his countenance, as they sparkled, moist with emotion amid the general whiteness ; for though he was filled with devotion and all absorbed in God, they had lost nothing of their accustomed fire. The equal whiteness of his shirt, and his chest, which was broad and well formed, though somewhat emaciated, in a word, the whole figure of Niccolò, appeared surrounded by a halo of glory, and it seemed to radiate from the dark background formed by the dusky walls of the room, the soiled garments of the tormentors, and their loathsome faces, some of which were red and bloated from excess of wine, others, deadly pale and disfigured by immoderate debauchery, and others, dark and bestial, from habitual and bloody violence. Not less revolting, though of less plebeian aspect, appeared the visage of Messer Benedetto. What is more revolting, than the face of a hypocrite ?

Heaving a sigh, and dropping his eyes to simulate compassion, he said :

" Niccolò, will you confess, that you have seduced and misled the people, as appears from the accusation, and the witnesses ? "

The old man made no answer but began to recite the verse, "*Domine adjutor meus*," &c.

Il Nobili gave the signal to the tormentors, and they wound the cord around their hands, and bent their knees, to give it the additional force of their own weight. The arms of the accused were drawn up over his back, and the muscles of his chest, strained to their utmost, twitched violently between his ribs; he was drawn up from the ground, and remained suspended and whirling in the air, with lips and eyelids firmly pressed together, but without uttering a groan. He was left thus for a few seconds, and was then let down again; but we have not the heart, to say more of these barbarities, of which for centuries, so many thousands of unfortunates have been the victims, whether more of cruelty, than of insanity, it would be difficult to decide. It is sufficient to say, that three times, the innocent old man underwent this torture, and his strength of soul so triumphed over that of his body, that his enemies had not the gratification of hearing one cry or groan, and at length, racked with pain, and utterly exhausted, but still constant, he was borne, rather than led into his dungeon.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WHEN Niccolò was left, half-dead, as one may say, on the squalid sack of straw which served him as a bed, it was already an hour after day-break. He remained, just as they had placed him, for that miserable body had now become an inert weight, deprived of all strength, and even had any of it remained, the least movement, the slightest motion, would have rendered insupportable, the intense pains which tormented him, from the tortures he had just undergone. But not even these sufferings could prostrate that soul, strengthened anew by the celestial vision, which he believed had appeared to him in his sleep, and by the thought, that he was now near the termination of his sufferings.

To the silence of the night, had succeeded, with the early light, that confused and continuous noise, which is heard in a city newly awaked out of sleep, and which penetrated even into this cell, through the high and narrow window, fortified with a stout iron grating, and a mill-hopper on the outside.*

Amidst that noise, that confused murmur, which was a mixture of voices and of distant clamor, of the rolling of carriages, the tramp of horses, and the din of the artisans, at work in their shops, Niccolò seemed sometimes to hear a louder hum, like that of a multitude of men passing under the walls of the prison; then, all at once, the uproar increased, with the diabolical cry of "Palle! Palle! Death to the Piagnoni!" then a sonorous voice gave the word of command, in German or Spanish, for, out of mistrust of the populace, the streets, in all directions, were lined with foreign soldiers.

"Oh! why have I lived so long?" said Niccolò, sighing. "Why was I not at the last battle, where my sons died? I might have died with them! Oh! that would have been hap-

* This word *tramoggia*, (mill-hopper) for which I can find no other definition, must mean, I think, a board or other screen, which, being placed in a slantwise position from the prison window, admitted the light at the top, but precluded the prisoner from looking out. — Transl.

piness indeed!" and exerting himself to raise his arms, he managed, in spite of the pain in his back and shoulders, to stop his ears with his hands.

At this point, he was seized with a desire for death, more ardent than ever, for, well versed in criminal processes on affairs of state, he was well aware, that whomever they might concern, they were, in these times, disposed of with the utmost expedition, and he began to calculate the probable number of hours he should have to endure this intense suffering, and he said, by way of consoling himself, "It is not possible I shall be living to-morrow. Could I probably have a confessor, who is not one of those villains?" He meant, could he get permission to have a Frate of San Marco, and not one of those who were opposed to Fra Girolamo and the republic, as, for instance, the Frate of San Croce. Then he reflected, "Our monks are obliged to keep themselves shut up in the convent, from very mistrust, and they might run a great risk in coming out; ought I to expose them to danger by sending for them? Fra Benedetto, whom I should prefer above all the rest, would he attempt to come? He is a saint, but he has very little courage. And if he should come, should I be willing to be the cause of his suffering outrage, abuse, and perhaps worse, from this perverse party? Oh! Niccolò, thou must learn to die, without other consolation than the memory of thy past life! Now is the time, to call into exercise that firmness of soul which thou hast preached to others, if thou wouldst not have it said of thee, as Christ said of the Pharisees," Luke xi. 46.

At the hour when food was usually distributed to the prisoners, towards noon, the jailer appeared with a roll of bread and a porringer of broth, of which the old man took a few spoonfuls, helping himself as well as he could, for rest had already partially restored to him the use of his arms. Then lying down again, and being left alone, he turned all his thoughts to God, endeavoring thus to prepare himself for death.

An hour after, he heard the bolt of the door drawn again, and he said to himself, "Behold, he cometh, who is to release my soul! Now, O Lord, I thank Thee, that Thou callest me at last, to glory!"

But instead of the man whose business it was to fulfil this gloomy office, he saw Messer Benedetto enter, who, carefully closing the door, advanced, and stood directly before the bed. Niccolò, who, knowing what he was, and seeing him assume a gracious air, fixed his eyes so firmly upon him as if scrutinizing his very thoughts, that the wicked hypocrite was obliged to

turn his own away. Then with a very modest and compassionate air, he said :

" Niccolò, I have come to visit you, because it is the duty of every Christian, to comfort those who are in tribulation, as you are. I wish you to understand now, that I am extremely sorry for you, but that it is not in *my* power to avert your fate. However, if there is anything that I can do, to relieve your distress, I shall be disposed to do it."

Niccolò, to whom the thought never occurred of lending any faith to the protestations of this man, was saying to himself, " What can he want of me ? " but he was unable to divine. However, he tried to answer him civilly, smothering the indignation which Benedetto's hypocrisy awoke in him.

" I thank you, Benedetto, and would gladly be persuaded of the truth of what you say. But henceforth, I have no other desire, but that what you do, may be done quickly ; and in the meantime, I shall be content, that you and every one else, leave me alone and without disturbance, for, in moments like these, a man needs to be alone with himself and God."

Having said these words, Niccolò waved his hand, as if dismissing him, and turned his face towards the wall, hoping to be rid of his unwelcome visitor. But Il Nobili never moved, and resumed in a still more insinuating tone :

" You speak too confidently, Niccolò. One would think you cared not whether you lived or died ! You despair too quickly ; you think you have none but enemies about you ; it is not so, indeed, Niccolò."

The old man, turning his head, eyed him again with a glance, which Nobili quickly avoided, and turning his eyes in another direction, said, a little more decidedly :

" Where I am, and with whom, I know full well, Benedetto, — and where I am, God be thanked, I am content to be, for I would die ten times rather than once see Florence in the hands she is now in. I tell you again, begone, and leave me in peace."

Il Nobili seemed to be in doubt, whether to go or stay ; he was silent, then resuming his first intention, he said :

" If I annoy you by coming hither, it is solely for your good. Listen to me, Niccolò — we are alone — no one can overhear us. The fact that I side with the Palleschi, and you with the people, is of little importance — we are both old, and I think that I also have a soul to save, and that is important enough. Do you think, that I do not see through the measures of the new government ? — that I do not know the foul wrong they have done you ? You will say, Why then were you the one to accuse

me? But how could I help obeying that knave of a Baccio? and, if I am come now purposely to avoid imbruing my hands in innocent blood, — am come to you to save you —”

Niccolò started at these words, but Il Nobili signed to him not to interrupt him, and continued:

“Would you despise life, because your party was defeated? Is this the example that our ancestors gave us? And, if every time that a party was dispersed and driven away from Florence, it had done as you wish to do, would it ever have returned? Endeavor to live, then, for none has ever found the nail that can scotch the wheel of fortune, and it is only for the dead, that there is no hope. I speak for your good, Niccolò; you see how these knaves desire your death; it is in your power to make them your friends. You are rich, Niccolò — I know that in your house — or, perhaps, at your farm near the Poggio, you have much treasure concealed — tell me the place. These are not hard times, money may be made again — but life! Tell me, where is this hiding place of yours, and with this treasure, I can manage that your enemies —”

Niccolò, who had no concealed treasure, and who, all at once plainly detected the rascality and greedy avarice which dictated this artifice, could contain himself no longer:

“Ah! ribald thief!” he cried, raising himself by a powerful effort to a sitting posture, “was it not enough, that you robbed me of the money I lent you to cover your peculations, that you must come now, when I am at the point of death, to cheat me with your feigned compassion, to rob me of what you believe I have, but which I have not, and never had? What *treasures*? What *hiding-places*? What dreams are these? I gave, for the necessities of the city, all I possessed, even to the little silver urn, where I kept the ashes of the sainted Fra Girolamo, and think you, that I have *wells* filled with florins? You always were a villain, and you always will be, and you never could be made to comprehend, how honest men act, who esteem their country and liberty more than gold, and even life — and to save my own, think you that I would be indebted to a Pallescan? Only once in ninety-one years have I had any dealings with the Palleschi, and that was my evil fortune, for the city would not have been enslaved, I should not be here, and the honor of my house would have remained unspotted, had I never accepted for a son-in-law a traitorous Pallescan.”

Seeing himself discovered, and only self-deluded, and feeling the rigorous truth of Niccolò's words, a spiteful rage took possession of the heart of Nobili, and to give it vent, and to disquiet Niccolò in some way or other, he said:

"Not even in the extremity to which you are now reduced, has your unbounded pride deserted you. Now, if you believe there is no other spot upon your honor, than that of having a Pallescan for a son-in-law, you need give yourself no farther uneasiness, for no Pallescan (and Troilo, gentleman as he is, least of all) ever had a thought of marrying the daughter of a man like you."

"What do you mean?"

"I never would have told you of the thing, but your mad pride drives me to it. Your daughter was the *concubine* and not the *wife* of Troilo."

And here the wretch, keenly enjoying the discomfiture of the poor old man, told him, from beginning to end, the whole story of the marriage. Niccolò, who listened to him with the greatest attention, at first, showed surprise; then a gleam of disdain flashed from between his eyelids; at length, he remained thoughtful a few minutes, then his face becoming composed, he said, with a serious and lofty air, to the manifest astonishment of Nobili, who expected something widely different:

"I thank God, I thank you, Benedetto, for what I hear. One thought, one alone has distressed me, in departing from this life, — that my daughter was the *wife* of a traitor — for I know the duty of a wife to her husband, however great a villain he may be! But now — she is loosed from every obligation! She is free! She may flee — she may detest him who has turned traitor to his country, and procured her ruin, — for his treachery to me, I do not even think of. And to what is my condition now reduced? To have suffered outrage and injury from a villain! To have been taken prisoner, by the opprobrious intrigues of a Pallescan, of a gentleman of the court! He has practised the old arts of his peers. And to me, has fallen the lot, which has been shared by so many loyal, honest hearts. But on whom does the infamy rest? On him, or on me? The axe can neither stain or take away one's honor! The fact of being deceived by a false-hearted villain, does not take away one's honor. But it does stain — it does take away a man's honor, to do what *you* have done, you and Troilo and Baccio, and all you Pallescans, however numerous, *you* may bear the palm of being the greatest traitors in the known world! And as long as the world endures, as long as the sun performs his daily round, men and history shall tell, that you, Palleschi, conquered, not by force, but by stratagem and treachery, and we, Piagnoni, were overpowered, not by force, but by stratagem and treachery!"

Niccolò, who, in pronouncing these proud words, had become

more and more excited, raised his arm as he ended, and pointed Nobili to the door, with the authority he used when master of his own house, forgetting, for the moment, that he was a prisoner. And even Nobili did not think of it, for humbled and overawed by the stern and august presence of the indomitable old man, and his commanding gesture, it seemed to him impossible to disobey.

Without a syllable of reply, without venturing to raise his eyes to Niccolò's face, he turned to the door, opened it, went out, and replacing the bolts, decamped; with what feelings of rage and shame, one may well imagine.

The hours, in the meantime, were passing. The sun began to decline in the west, and Niccolò was still alone in his prison, without knowing anything of his fate, and also, without the aids and consolations, which are usually conceded to the condemned.

But all had not abandoned him, and, at this very hour, there was one, who was preparing to encounter every risk to fulfil what, on such occasions, virtue, friendship and honor command.

Where any danger is in question, the reader, perhaps, will not expect to find the name of Fra Benedetto, the Superior of San Marco, him, who, in the first chapter of this story, had given such a sad proof of his lack of courage. However, he it was, who had no sooner heard of the seizure of Niccolò, than he resolved to be the one to aid him, to be near him, to bring to him, in the last hours of his life, the comforts of religion, made still more precious by their long intercourse of confiding friendship. Rumor, which, in such a rapid and wonderful manner, disseminates the news of passing events, had divulged the fact of Troilo's treachery, and the poor Frate, calling to mind that it was he who had counselled Niccolò to receive him into his family, bitterly thought, "I am the cause of his ruin!"

This thought, — the thought of fulfilling a duty, the desire to atone, in some way, for the evil he believed he had done, superseded every other consideration; it conquered every fear in the heart of the simple-minded old man, — so true it is, that virtue is the most powerful of all agencies!

He offered a short, but earnest prayer to God, that He would aid him and inspire him with that strength and courage, in which he felt he was so deficient, took his staff, and left his cell.

He went to that of the sub-prior, told him of his intention, transferred to him his authority, in case he should not return, begged him and all the fraternity to pray for him, and return-

mending to him, the convent, the observance of all the rules of the order, and of reciprocal kindness, and exhorting him to suffer, with firmness, the present tribulations, took his leave, saying, "Remember me in your prayers." The sub-prior accompanied him to the door of the cloister, and as they walked along, several Frati joined them, so that, by the time they reached the outer gate, quite a number had collected, who were desirous of accompanying their superior. But this he would not permit, he thanked and embraced them all, saying:

"It shall be with me as God wills, but to go in such numbers would attract attention, and might be for the worse. Now, open the door," said he, to the porter, "and let me go in the name of God."

There was considerable delay before the door-keeper removed all the bolts and bars, with which the main entrance was barred and fortified: when he was about to turn the last key, he looked out through a little window into the piazza, to see that all was safe without; at last, he opened the door, and as Fra Benedetto crossed the threshold, he took his hand and kissed it, saying to him:

"You are doing a holy work, and the help of God will not fail you. Tell Messer Niccolò, I pray you, that he is remembered by the poor door-keeper, for I also pray for him, and when he shall be among the blessed, let him pray God for me."

Fra Benedetto went away, charging him to lock the doors securely. His first thought was, to go to the house of the Lapi, to see if any of the family were there, and, if so, to concert with them the mode of reaching Niccolò, or, perhaps, be conducted by some one of them to the cell of Niccolò.

He took his way through the Via Larga, which was nearly empty from one end to the other, and the few who were passing along, were either people of the lowest class, or soldiers. The shops were all half closed, for it was hardly safe remaining in Florence at this time, and particularly, in the lonely and retired streets. The poor old man went along, keeping close to the wall, and hurrying his steps as much as age and infirmity would allow, and, to tell the truth, his heart trembled like a leaf. When he reached the Palazzo Medici, now Riccardi, he saw the hall-door in possession of a guard of lansquenets, and he went on, still close to the wall, and making himself as small as possible. He heard a good deal of laughing and joking among the soldiers, some insults, perhaps, aimed at him, but *they spoke German*, and he did not understand what they said. *In the little square of S. Giovanni, where the most of them*

bivouacked, there were a great many assembled, and an equal number before the convent, but not even here did any harm happen to him, and, passing through the Via de' Martelli, and then through S. Giovanni, he found himself at the door of the Lapi. It was open, but a soldier was on guard there, with his arquebus on his shoulder, leaning with his right hand on his gun-rest, which was placed on the ground. Fra Benedetto felt for a moment as if his courage was wholly gone at the idea of passing so near this ugly face, scorched like an old pot, with whiskers that from each side rose up to the very temples. However, plucking up his spirits, and praying God to aid him, he advanced, and looking at the soldier as piteously as he could, as if to implore his favor, he remained uncertain a moment, looking to see if he might venture to proceed. Fortunately, the soldier was a Spaniard, and the Spaniards in these times (it was the golden age of the Inquisition) could not see the dress of a Dominican, without that feeling of trepidation, which the rogue of our days experiences at the sight of the uniform of a *gend'arme*. For this reason, therefore, this fellow, if he did no more, at least made his reverence to Fra Benedetto, and moved aside to let him pass.

"Appearances do not always tell the truth," thought the latter, and at this moment, he thought of Fanfulla, who, with that terrible face of his, was, nevertheless, an honest man. But he was no sooner within, than very different thoughts assailed him, for the entry and court-yard were filled with trunks, chests and furniture, clerks with registers, taking lists of them, and, seeing ill-omened faces going about and busying themselves through the house, faces which evidently belonged to constables or dependents of the Sheriff or the Exchequer, he was convinced that this unhappy house was subjected to a legal pillage, by reason of the confiscation authorized by the government, of the property of the *rebels*, as they called them.

Whoever leaves a beautiful, flowery, well-cultivated garden, and visits it again, after the inundation of a torrent has spoiled and disfigured it, leaving it covered with mud and gravel, experiences far less bitterness than Fra Benedetto felt, on seeing that house, once the seat of order, plenty, prudent management, and all that renders a family honored and respected, now in the hands of robbers, who were despoiling it, and reducing it to a most unseemly condition. The tears came into his eyes, and as he looked about, seeking for some one who could tell him whether any of the family were there, he saw Il Nobili, standing in the centre of the court, talking with a rough looking man, who was giving him some keys out of a

number which he held in his hands, and he said, speaking of some which he retained :

“ These keys of the cellar, I will keep, and we can examine them at our leisure.”

In the meantime, from behind his large person, made still larger by an ample majestic *lucco* of red cloth, a woman emerged, who with her apron was covering her face, and wiping her eyes, and who, keeping at a wide distance from Il Nobili, came without seeing him, directly upon Fra Benedetto. She did not see who it was, until she ran directly against him, when, raising her eyes, she recognized him, and he her.

“ Oh ! poor Fede ! you are weeping !” said the good old man, whose own eyelids were not dry.

“ And you too,— who could help weeping ?” She could not say another word, for convulsive sobs checked her utterance. In addition to all the other tribulations of these times, and as if to put the finishing stroke to the whole, she had just been obliged with her own hands, to deliver up all the keys of the house to Il Nobili. Those keys, which for fifty years had been her thought, her care, her glory, which she considered a part of herself, which locked up provisions of every kind ; household napery, a great part of which had been spun by her own hands, or, at any rate, selected, bought, arranged and repaired for so long a time by herself alone, and now into whose hands had all that property fallen ? Hearts of housekeepers, chambermaids, mistresses of the wardrobe ! Hearts of grandmothers, old aunts, maidens of fifty, you know what grief was hers !

Fra Benedetto did his best, to encourage and console her, and then inquired, if any of the family were in the house. He learned that Liza only, with her child, was, so to say, a prisoner since the evening previous, in her room in the upper story. He heard the story of the artful manœuvre at Gavinana, and this narration, mingled with sobs, exclamations, tears and sighs, was incoherently made, as she conducted him slowly up stairs, on his way to Liza's chamber.

“ Oh ! most holy Madonna !” said Fede, with her hand on the latch of the door, “ what a spectacle you will witness ! The poor creature seems crazed ! She has not slept the whole night, and she does not weep, but remains silent, with her eyes fixed on the ground, only that every now and then, she says ‘ He was a traitor !’ and there is no way that one can make her move, or speak, or make any other answer. Oh ! blessed Virgin ! what an end this house has come to, and we, poor creatures, unfortunate wretches ! And what has become of

the master? and the sons? and Madonna Laudomia? Not even to know what has happened to them? Oh! Lord! what ruin! what ruin!"

"Come, come, open the door," said the Frate, "there is no remedy here, all we can do is to trust in God."

The old woman opened the door, and they entered. Liza was seated before a table, with her head lying upon her arms, which were crossed upon the table, so that her face was wholly concealed, her hair was neglected and dishevelled, and her clothes, equally disordered, merely wrapped about her.

Beside the table, was standing the little Ariguccio, who, so small, that his face could not reach up to the edge of the table, was clinging to it with his tiny hands, and, grieved and frightened to see his mamma in such a state, was trying to raise himself by his little chubby fingers, so that he could look into her face, but she, silent and motionless, did not appear to take any notice of the child's efforts.

"Poor unhappy one!" said Fra Benedetto, deeply moved, "if your error was great, the chastisement is no less so!" Then softly approaching her, he called her repeatedly, but in vain; he shook her gently, and then placing his hand carefully under her forehead, he raised her head. She groaned as if the movement gave her pain, then looked up, and fixed her eyes upon the Frate, with such an expression, that he, more distressed than ever, thought in his heart:

"Oh! God, her senses have fled!" She then said, shaking her head:

"Oh! what do you say? Could you have imagined he was a traitor?" She remained silent a moment, then added, shrugging her shoulders:

"It is even so. He *was* a traitor! Oh! blessed daughter!" said the Frate, "poor girl! You have but too much cause to be afflicted — and I, who have partly heard your story, am come here purposely to see how you are, to do for you the little in my power, to console you, and to weep with you — Come poor girl — cheer up — a little effort — your tribulation is indeed terrible, but God does not send it for your harm. He sends us trials, in order that we may turn to Him, — to remind us, that we are not to seek happiness here below, but in Him alone."

Liza appeared all attention to these words, a circumstance, from which the good old man drew a happy augury, but suddenly interrupting him, and seizing his hands with a convulsive grasp, she said:

"But tell me the truth, Fra Benedetto, could you have believed that he was a traitor?"

"What shall I say to you, my daughter? No, I could not have believed it, but who but God can penetrate the hearts of men? This much is true, that I said too much to Messer Niccolò."

"Ah! then *he* knew it! But why, why not tell me of it, poor unhappy girl? Why did you all conspire to betray the unfortunate?"

"Calm yourself, my daughter, calm yourself, for God's sake, you have not understood me."

And Mona Fede added weeping, "Be quiet, madonna, for that is not what he was saying to you."

"I am quiet — I am not saying anything — what did I say?" And the unhappy girl gazed on them, now on one, and now on the other, with eyes filled with an expression, so strange, so fearful, that both of them were terrified.

"Oh! do not think of these things now; come, try to rouse yourself a little — drive off the remembrance of that wretched man — pardon him — pray God to have pity upon him, and then forget him."

"How can I forget him, when I have him always here," (pressing her hands upon her breast,) "here in my heart, it tortures me, it burns here, it leaves me no rest or repose? I, who loved him so much, who could see only him alone of all the world! Why did you not tell me in time, 'Beware, he is a traitor!'"

"And because he is so, for this very reason, you must try to forget him, daughter, and especially now, when your father is reduced to such extremity! Think of your poor father!"

Liza, as if struck with a fearful idea, wholly new and unexpected, answered:

"Oh! my father, that is true, what have they done with him? Ah! it is true, wretched one, it is true. Pity me, Fra Benedetto, have compassion upon me, poor crazed one, I feel it, my brain is crazed. Oh! tell me, what has become of my poor father!"

And here, her tears poured in torrents, while she continued to say in broken and incoherent sentences, "And to think that I have been the cause of it all! That I shall have his death upon my conscience! Oh!" she said, rising resolutely, and arranging her dress a little, "to think that they fell upon him; that he was entrapped on every side. Let us go, for the love of God, let us go to him immediately, for I wish to die at his feet, I can die no where else! Ah! if I could save him, could find a way to die for him! Teach me the way, and I will take it. What can I give them? What have I left to give? The life of this child? Take it, all, everything, rather than have the blood of this old man besprinkle my face, rather than have it rain down upon my soul like infernal fire."

The Frate and Mona Fede, while she raved thus wildly, tried every way to quiet her, with words, gestures, caresses and persuasions, which the poor girl neither heard or heeded. But the free flow of her tears did her more good than all their efforts, and gradually receding from that violent and convulsed state, her sobs becoming less frequent, and the heavings of her breast less spasmodic, her natural looks returned somewhat, and Fra Benedetto began to think he might venture to go out with her, and endeavor to penetrate with her into the cells of the prison.

Mona Fede did her best, to give Liza an appearance of decency. She smoothed her hair, and put her dress into a little better order, while Liza, taking her child in her arms, kissed it and pressed it to her breast, bathing its face with her tears, and saying :

"Oh! poor little one. When you shall learn your story, the story of your poor mamma, you will know how dear you have cost us all! Fede, I commend Ariguccio to your care. Lock the door after us."

She placed the child on the floor, and started to go out; then suddenly stopping, she turned to embrace him again, holding his little head between her hands :

"Oh! my nursling, may God bless thee! God will never punish thee for the sins of thy mother! Thou art innocent, Oh! thou canst pray for me!"

She kissed him once more, saying, "Shall I see thee again, my child," then, tearing herself away from him, followed the Frate, and descended into the court-yard.

The Frate thought he would speak to Nobili, to obtain permission for Liza to go out, and, better still, to entreat permission for her to see her father. He found Messer Benedetto in a corner of the piazza, where, amidst a heap of furniture, he was superintending the doings of his minions, seated in Niccolò's own big chair, the very one which always stood by the fireplace in Niccolò's bedroom, and which Fra Benedetto recognized too well. This sight, so painfully renewed the memory of his lost friend, that he could not approach and speak to Nobili, without betraying in his face and eyes, a great degree of agitation. However, making an effort to repress his emotions, he said : "Messer Benedetto, I have a favor to ask of you, which is, that Madonna Liza, Niccolò's daughter, may be permitted to leave the house, and that she may be safely conducted to the prison to see her father. You will not deny her this consolation, surely?"

Il Nobili was on the point of saying no, at once, for he was

very far from being disposed to gratify Niccolò in anything, and would have gladly made him more unhappy than he had been able to do, enraged and infuriated as he still was, by the scene we have already described. But, unable to put off his hypocritical nature, he considered that he could gain nothing by being so severe in this case, and that he might, on the contrary, at very little expense, appear benevolent, humane and superior to all thoughts of vengeance or of party. He said, therefore :

"Truly I ought not, I have no right to do so, the orders are strict. However, I know myself, it would be too inhuman to prevent a daughter from embracing her father."

He heaved a sigh, and raised his eyes to heaven, adding, "Those people are unhappy enough already. Oh ! these *reasons of state*, they are terrible !"

"God will reward you for your humanity. Now then, please give us one of your men to accompany us."

"Here, Sir Cecco," said he, beckoning to a meagre, ill-dressed fellow, "a word with you. Go with these persons, and procure admission to Niccolò. If any opposition is made, make use of my name."

Having obtained this permission, the Frate set off with Liza and their guide. Passing under the carriage-way, to get into the street, they saw, thrown on the ground, amidst a heap of other goods, the portrait of Fra Girolamo, and they observed that it had in mockery been scrawled over with charcoal, horns appended to his forehead, and other insolence and obscenity, and turning away their eyes in grief, the time seemed interminable, before they found themselves out of this scene of desolation.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE fit of passion, into which Niccolò had suffered himself to be transported against Nobili, and the severe language he had used towards him, the afflicted old man reviewed over again in the bitterness of his heart, and he lamented that he had not been able to control his feelings at a time, when the near approach of death, ought to have filled his soul with meekness and humility.

He collected his thoughts, and becoming enabled at length to forget that painful scene, he turned his soul to God, asking pardon for his own error, and proffering the desire, at least, of pardoning him who had procured the ruin of Florence, and praying that He would of His mercy, purge him in these, his last moments, of all the leaven of hatred which might yet remain in his heart.

Thus, by degrees, he became calm, and remained in this state, until the clock of the Palagio struck one. He then heard in the adjoining passage, a sound of footsteps, and that jingling of keys, which often wounds the ear of poor prisoners; then he heard the unlocking of his door, the sliding of bolts, and, at length, the door was opened, and a man entered, who, from his black cloak, and the medal suspended from his neck, with the Florentine lily upon it, he knew to be the Chancellor of the Balìa. Five or six beadles and constables accompanied him, forming a circle around the Chancellor, who, turning to Niccolò, and making use of the form of speech customary on such occasions, said: "Niccolò, I am extremely sorry, to be obliged to announce what it is my express office to announce to you, that, by a majority of votes in the honorable Balìa of the Florentine people, you are condemned to be beheaded this night, at ten o'clock, in the prison yard. So may our Lord Jesus Christ receive your soul in peace. Niccolò, answer me: do you understand? for these men must give in their testimony that you do so."

"I do understand," said the old man, in whom this announcement produced no change of countenance or manner; then he immediately added, speaking tranquilly, but, at the same time, in grave and solemn manner:

“Not for myself, for I willingly accept this death for my sins, but for the sake of the rights of the citizens of Florence, and the faith of solemn oaths duly sworn, which are now broken and falsified in my person, do I protest and declare this condemnation null and void.” These *birri* and this chancellor, who had everything of the *birro* but the dress, and who gave themselves no concern about anything but their office, either did not understand, or paid no attention to this protest of Niccolò, mistaking it, perhaps, for the usual declaration of innocence of all the condemned, at the moment in which their death is announced to them.

They assisted him to rise, without either maltreating him or using any great respect, or showing any compassion for him, but with that indifference, which is acquired in all professions by force of habit, and supporting him, (for they saw that he could with difficulty stand or walk,) they conducted him slowly into the chapel.

Since the year 1260, when the palace of the *bargello* or sheriff was used by the Priori, and they heard mass every morning in this chapel, it had undergone no change, but had maintained its sacred and venerable antiquity. It was a rectangle, overarched by a bold, lofty vault, cut into four parts by ribs of considerable elevation, which rose from the capitals of the slender columns placed at the angles, and met at the top, where, as key-stone, was placed the Florentine shield of the Ghibelline party. These ribs were painted in transverse stripes of red and white; the ground of azure, now blackened by time and the smoke of candles, was sown with stars of gold. Opposite the entrance, was the altar, with a crucified Christ, large as life, of black wood, covered to the middle of the leg with a dark tunic, or upper vest, embroidered with silver, like the “Volto Santo at Lucca;” two candles were burning at each side of the altar. The walls were painted by those artists who ornamented the *camposanto* di’ Pisa, Buffalmacco, Gaddi, Tafo, etc.; but these were, even then, so besmoked, that but little of their pictures could be seen. The light reflected from the setting sun (when higher, it could not reach there), brightened the colors of the painted panes of the two great windows, and, penetrating into the interior of the chapel, diffused there, a mysterious and uncertain tint, in which the altar lights alone shone out distinctly.

Near this altar, had already assembled the “Brotherhood of Mercy:” four brethren and a leader or superior, wrapped in their black cloaks, with the cowl drawn down over the face, of which the eyes only were visible, through two round holes

cut in the cloth. Against the wall, in one corner, they had leaned their large, but portable, crucifix, in the upper limb of which, was inserted a small bow, supporting a black flag marked with two white crosses. When Niccolò entered, supported by the turnkeys, the *brothers* were reciting the psalms of the vespers, in a low voice. They no sooner saw him, than they all moved forward to meet him, and took him out of the hands of these ruffians, who immediately went to the door, and remained there on guard. One of the brotherhood said :

"God save thee, Niccolò, since He calls thee to Himself, from the miseries of this mortal life ; we are here, to assist thee, and render thee all the aid that in us lies, as is our duty, and in accordance with the rules of our holy order."

So saying, they led him towards a couch, placed before the altar, where those, condemned to death, usually reposed when weariness, illness, or old age required it.

Niccolò, seating himself, replied : " I thank you, brothers, God knows, what will remunerate you for your kindness." The monks then went to a corner of the chapel, where a little table was prepared, and brought it to the old man ; then covering it with a white cloth, they laid it in the neatest manner, with cups, plates and everything proper for a repast, excepting knives, which were not allowed to the condemned ; they then asked Niccolò when he would sup, and what kind of food he would like.

" I do not wish to burden myself with food, my sons, because, during the few hours that remain to me, I ought to think of my spirit, and not of my body ; but, not to lose too much strength, I will accept a little broth, and a drop of wine, and again, I thank you for all your kindness."

Both appeared without delay ; and after taking this slight refreshment, Niccolò evidently revived, for he was extremely faint and weak when he came in. Those who were serving him, seeing him sit more erect, and turn his eyes around with a look no longer so languid and spent as at first, seemed to be concerting something between themselves, and whispering a few words in each other's ears. At length, four of them walked towards the door, keeping themselves between that and Niccolò, while the fifth seated himself at his side, as if to converse with him, — according to their custom with the condemned, — and approaching his mouth to Niccolò's ear, said, softly :

"Messère, I have something to reveal to you—but be careful not to give any sign, or you will be observed by the guard."

Niccolò, a little surprised, signified his assent.

"You must know," resumed the other, "that I am Bozza, and those there are your Messer Bindo, Messer Lamberto, and the man they call Fanfulla, and a servant of theirs; and this morning before day-break, they came to call me, and we agreed to change places with the *brethren*, who were to be here to assist you, and we are come in their stead, and under these cloaks we are well armed, and we are resolved to liberate you, or die with you; and what Bozza promised to you in San Marco, he still holds to — the manner in which it is to be done, you will now hear from Messer Lamberto, whom I will send to you, and thus, by a little with one, and a little with another, you can speak to us all, as the Frati usually do with the condemned."

And, before the old man could answer, he rose, and in a few moments Lamberto and Bindo came and seated themselves at each side of the old man; each secretly taking a hand, and, from time to time, warmly kissing it under their cowls, Lamberto said:

"Our only fear was, that you would not be able to walk, but since, thank God, you can, we will do the rest; we will rush upon the guard, and if we can succeed in despatching them at once, before the alarm is given, we have here a cloak of the Brethren of Mercy, which you can put on, and we will go out together — we shall meet other brethren — it will seem as if they were relieving us. I hope we shall succeed — no other hope remains to us. Many of the populace are assembled outside, to wait for and assist us."

"Lamberto, Bindo, my sons!" said Niccolò, interrupting him, "I thank God that He has procured me a comfort which I never expected, and which I did not deserve — that of seeing you once more. I thank you; and, knowing you, as I do, I know that you would do even more than you say; but I cannot accept your generous offers, and I pray you, nay, I command you, as your father, to dismiss all thoughts of this kind. If I could escape from this peril without danger to any one, I would not do it; and, think you, I would be willing to risk the lives of so many, your own lives, which may, perhaps, at some future time, be spent in the service of the city? Think you, that I regret to die? That it seems hard to me, after ninety-one years of life, after enduring so many hardships for the sake of seeing this poor country honored and happy, that I am not permitted to remain longer, to see her fallen to the depth of misery, and I, unable to make any resistance, or find any remedy? Think you, that I can fear death? I desire it, my sons; it is the only sweet and tranquil thought among the

many painful ones that harass me! And would you take it from me? Would you take from me that repose which God at last vouchsafes to these weary, worn out limbs, precisely because He knows they have suffered enough? What aid could I now bring to this unhappy country? Would you have me forget for myself, those teachings I have given you, that man's aim should be, not to protract his life to an impossible length, but to use it virtuously, and learn to leave it manfully, when necessity demands it?"

The two young men could not restrain their tears at these words, and they urged him, with the most pressing entreaties, seeking every means to induce him to change his purpose: Then Niccolò, clothing himself with that air of authority which not one of his family ever had the thought to oppose, said:

"I believed that by example and by words, I had taught you that virtue which belongs to good citizens, and I consoled myself with the thought, that I had brought you up in such a way, that, on every occasion, you would place duty to your country before everything else. Are you willing, that I should go to death, with the despairing thought, that I cannot obtain even this? Of what consequence is it to the well-being of Florence, whether an old man of ninety-one years live a few days more or less? Think of her, and not of me, leave this place, and secure your own safety, you, who are young men, and whose lives may yet be useful? Think now, of re-uniting the outlaws of the popular cause. I have grown old in experience of this sort, and know how these things ought to be managed. Think of preparing to avenge your country's cause, to return one day strong and ready to liberate that country which *we* have not been able to protect from traitors. Think of this, if you would be sons of Niccolò, and if you value his blessing. Did I not see your brothers die? Did I weep or lament, or strive to prevent them from doing their duty? Think you, that I loved them less than you love me? Well, I shall not add another word, for a contest like this, degrades you and me. Adieu, my children, let us now part, and we shall see each other again, happy in that country, won by the brave, and not by cowards; in that kingdom, which, in the words of Christ, *vim patitur, et violenti rapiunt illud*."

The admirable and indomitable constancy of the brave old man, communicated itself like a flame, to the hearts of the two young men, who felt transported, by such an example, into a superior region, where earthly affections and earthly miseries seemed beneath their feet. Convinced, that all their entreaties would be in vain, and inspired with a desire of showing them-

selves what he wished them to be, (their not being able to save him against his will, being their only consolation,) they both promised him, not to deviate in any respect from his wishes.

"We will learn to conquer our grief," said Lamberto, "and your virtue shall be our support. You shall not have cause to be ashamed of your sons, and as long as our lives endure, we swear, that your wishes, your thoughts, shall be ours."

"And thus, will God bless you," answered Niccolò, wholly tranquilized, "thus, will you be accompanied always with my blessing, and my prayers will aid you from Heaven, where I hope to have a place. Now, a few words upon things here below, and then I shall have no other thought pertaining to earth. Lamberto, you remember, that not long ago, I commended to you my family, — all my family now is comprised in that boy. Remember, that you are brothers, love each other, help each other, and you, Bindo, since God wills that you become an orphan, attend to the counsels of Lamberto, and regulate your life according to them. Laudomia, I need not recommend to you Lamberto, she is your wife, and I know what you are. But Liza! Oh! when she was born, who could have thought—but God's will be done! She has more need than ever of aid and comfort, poor unhappy one!" And here he told them all that he had heard from Il Nobili.

The two young men were struck dumb by this recital, so great was their indignation against the traitor, and their astonishment at a state of things so entirely unexpected by them, and after giving vent to their feelings in a few brief words, they narrated, in their turn, to the old man, all that had taken place since they had parted on the road to Prato; how they had left Laudomia at Monte Murlo, in the care of the priest and Selvaggia; that though overpowered by illness, and utterly prostrated in strength, and unable to move herself, she could not rest till they hastened back to Florence, to try every means of saving her father; and then it was Niccolò's turn to wonder, that human wickedness could reach such a pitch, and that he should have confided so fully in a villain like Troilo. "Twas God's will to chastise us, and He suffered us to become blind, He took from us the power to discern the right, — *quos vult perdere dementat*, — but even in this matter, *fiat voluntas tua!*"

"Now, carry to my daughters, to Laudomia, the angel of my poor house, my last blessing, and to Liza my pardon. May God forgive her for what she has done. Take care of the poor forsaken one, and let us console ourselves, that the shameful fraud by which she was deceived, degrades not the victim, but the author of such infamy. Thank Fiesulla, Monza,

and your servant, who, for love of me, were willing to lend themselves to an undertaking so desperate, and may God reward and bless you all."

Just then, a slight noise was heard at the door. The young men turned round, and Niccolò too, leaving his words unfinished, and Bozza, who had been speaking to some one outside, approached him, saying:

"Fra Benedetto of San Marco is here, and he has brought Madonna Liza with him."

"God of Heaven!" said Niccolò, filled with the most lively joy, "how have I merited so much consolation!" And it was, in effect, the greatest he could then experience.

"You will withdraw a little," he said to his sons, "it will not be well for them to recognize you."

The Frate came forward, followed by Liza, who, with her head bowed down, was weeping and trembling.

"Oh! Fra Benedetto, you have been willing, then, to put yourself to so much trouble, and, perhaps, peril, solely to come here and comfort me!" and the two old men rushed into each other's arms, their white locks mingling in their long, warm embrace. When they released themselves, Niccolò saw at his feet, with her head on the ground, the unhappy Liza, who, at the sight of her father in this funereal spot, the tremendous preparations for his death, and the horrible thought, that all this was through *her* agency, was smitten with such terror, such overwhelming despair, that she would have been glad to die, to be swallowed up and covered by the marble pavements on which her head was resting, to be annihilated in an instant, to escape from a degree of agony, a thousand times greater than anything she had ever been able to imagine. Her limbs, bedewed with an icy sweat, shook with a convulsive tremor, and she said, from time to time, in a spent voice:

"Pardon — pardon!"

The heart of an enemy would have felt pity for her. Think, then, what that of a father must have experienced! He attempted to raise her, but Fra Benedetto did not give him time; assisting and encouraging her with kind words, which Niccolò accompanied with expressions equally kind, he enabled her to stand up. When she lifted up her face, and fixed upon her father two glazed, unmeaning eyes, the same conviction which Fra Benedetto had felt, a short time before, forced itself upon the mind of her father, and he said, raising his eyes to heaven:

"Unfortunate girl! This is the ultimatum of our misfortunes!" Then taking her by the hand, he drew her toward

him, and, as he laid his other hand on her forehead, it was cold as marble. Trying to make his tones and his looks as kind and soothing as possible, he said, laying her head upon his breast:

"Here, come here, my poor child! lean here, rest your poor head, warm it on the heart of your father, who has pardoned, and who pities you. Oh! how cold you are, dearest! God of mercy, forgive, what, in my anger, I uttered against this unhappy one; remember only my forgiveness, and her repentance, she has suffered enough, she has been punished sufficiently. Liza, my daughter! take courage, listen to me! It is your father, who loves you, and who speaks to console you!"

Liza, who, until then, had continued to tremble, without giving any indication, that she heard what her father was saying, seemed to come to herself a little, and she answered:

"I hear you, papa. God will reward you, for your kindness to me, wretch that I am!"

"Poor girl! Come, come, take courage; you know we must soon part, give me the satisfaction, Liza, of seeing you a little more tranquil, a little more like yourself. I repeat it: I have pardoned you, and I bless you. It was not your fault, poor girl! you were drawn into error, and what error! we also, fell into the same error. But you, you have been too foully betrayed! Now, listen to me, I have something to tell you. It will grieve, will astonish you, at first, but it looses you from a great burden; it will release you from future misery. Is your mind composed enough, to listen to me?"

"I am tranquil, papa, you see I am."

Niccolò, observing the heaving of her breast, her paleness, and especially her look, did not feel assured of this, but, hoping that, what he had to say, might be a benefit, rather than an injury, he went on —

"Hear, then, my Liza, you well know you have been betrayed, but you do not know to what degree. Now, before I say any more to you, I wish you to understand, that the disgrace belongs to the deceiver, and not to the deceived. So you are not to believe yourself what you never could be, for a wicked woman you never have been. Know, then, and I tell you this for your consolation, you are not the wife of Troilo, you never were."

Liza started.

"Calm yourself, poor girl! Hear me, you shall see — for God will perhaps open the way — attend to what I say. No, *you are not his wife*. It was a feigned marriage. He whom *you believed to be a priest*, was his groom; and, not content

with this, he laid snares against the honor of your sister. The night before last, he conveyed her to the Barone, and, had not a merciful God interposed for her aid, she could not have escaped his villany." And in a few words, he related to her the whole story. "Poor girl! your case seems horrible, and so it did to me, when I heard it; but consider, you were not to blame, since it was not of your own free will, and it can never be your disgrace. It was misfortune, tremendous misfortune, and nothing else; but would it not be a greater misfortune, to find yourself irrevocably his wife? Now that you are your own again, you can — I will not say *hate* him, pardon him, daughter, and so may God pardon him — but you can flee from him; you are not bound to a traitor, and you may live, if not happy, at least tranquil and honored with your brothers, with Laudomia; whither they go, you can go, and perhaps — I am an old man, and know that nothing earthly is lasting, happiness is not, neither is grief — perhaps, the time will come, when the wounds of your poor heart will be healed."

While Niccolò was speaking, Liza kept her eyes steadily fixed upon his face, and appeared to be listening to him. Suddenly clapping her hands, and wringing them convulsively, she said, in tones which came from a heart bursting with grief:

"Then he *never* loved me, *never!* not even *then!* What he told me was *never* true, not even *once!* And what a face! What angelic features! How beautiful was Troilo!"

At this moment, Niccolò, who, filled with fatal presentiments, had kept his eyes anxiously fixed on Liza, saw her eyes suddenly change their expression, her whole face seemed transformed, as if a mask had dropped from it.

The light of reason, which was already vacillating, was by this blow, utterly extinguished; the brain of the unhappy girl whirled, she was mad!

She remained motionless for some time, then, stretched her arms as one does from sleepiness or sloth, then she laughed, and, moving her lips rapidly, as if talking to herself, made gesticulations, now with one hand, now with the other.

Niccolò covered his eyes with his hands, and Fra Benedetto, filled with pity for him and Liza, said, with altered voice:

"Niccolò, now is the time, to call to mind, that Jesus, our Lord, holy and innocent, suffered on the cross more than you suffer at this moment. He suffered for you, for poor Liza, also. Let us adore His justice on this unhappy one! Do we know that this is not for her good? Do we not surely know, that she also was redeemed by His divine blood? From a God of so much love, can we not hope for mercy? Let us adore, and bow our

heads, and let us say together, '*Non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu.*'"

Niccolò, who had remained till now with his hands over his eyes, repeated — "*Non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu.*"

Seeing Fanfulla at a little distance, whom he recognized through his disguise, by his tall stature, he beckoned him to his side, and said to him softly, "Conduct her home, and may God have mercy upon her."

Fanfulla went to Liza, took her by the hand, and conducted her away, for, like a senseless thing, she suffered herself to be led in any direction. They went out, and as they crossed the threshold, the poor old man raised his weary arms to implore the Divine Goodness for his daughter, and, remembering the curses he had one day heaped upon her head, he cried, "My God! my God! why hast Thou so answered my prayer?"

Meantime, the stained window-panes had lost all color, they now reflected only the lights at the altar, for the sky without, was quite dark. Other Brothers of Mercy made their appearance, dividing into two groups, on each side of the altars, and reciting psalms in a low voice, so as not to disturb the condemned, who still remained motionless, with his head bowed upon his breast; and Fra Benedetto, seating himself at his side, took his hands, pressing them affectionately from time to time, without speaking, for he felt that he ought to give opportunity for that last and terrible impression, to subside of itself. They remained thus for some minutes, then he said:

"God gives you an opportunity, my dear Niccolò, of deserving much, in these last hours that remain of life, since He causes you to suffer so much. It is your duty, to endeavor to bear this cross, with promptitude of spirit and resignation; and, to quiet your mind a little with regard to Liza, think, that He who cares for the sparrows upon the house-tops, and clothes the lilies of the field, will have much more thought for a creature whom He has formed in His own image, and whom He has not created to torture or destroy. Consider, how many, and how great, were her wrongs, and that the evil which the Lord permits to fall over her intellect, was perhaps to render her more obtuse to a sense of her wrongs. Let us adore, Niccolò, let us adore; and let us hope in Him who breaks not the bruised reed, '*calamum quassatum non confringet.*' Let us hope in the Author of that precept of love, with which He wills that all men in their misery, should raise their souls to Him, and call Him Master."

Niccolò heaved a sigh, clasped his hand, and said, "*Non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu,*" and remained thoughtful a moment then he said:

"My dear Fra Benedetto, I most certainly believe all that you say to me; and can I doubt the goodness of God, when He grants to me the greatest, the sweetest of all consolations, that of having you here, and of hearing words like these from your lips? Be it as God wills, with me, and my poor children. Into His hands I remit everything. Now, one thing remains for me to say to you—a last wish of mine—and then we will think only of Heaven. I desire to be interred to-morrow, without pomp, clothed in the habit of S. Dominick, in our family tomb in San Marco, at the altar of the Madonna, and that you would say mass for the repose of my soul."

"I promise you, Niccolò, this and every other thing that you may desire, shall be done."

"That is all, Fra Benedetto, and I thank you; but yet there is one more thing I have to ask. After so many shocks, I feel weary, and in pain. I would gladly fix my thoughts on God, but my mind is not equal to it, my head throbs with pain, and I feel that I am wasting. I have one wish—that you would let me lean my head upon your shoulder, and that you would press my forehead with your hands. It seems to me, that this would refresh me, and, after a little repose, I could better attend to the concerns of my soul."

Fra Benedetto did not let him wait, to finish his words, he took the head of the venerable old man between his hands, and laid it on his breast, and pressed his forehead tightly, taking care to place himself in such a position, as to support it for a length of time without fatigue.

Niccolò closed his eyes, and in a few minutes, from extreme weariness, he was in a placid sleep. The Brethren seeing this, ceased their chant, for fear of awaking him, and each remained motionless in his own place. This silent and terrible scene lasted for nearly half an hour, yet, terrible as it was, there was something of celestial peace, in the sight of the severe tranquillity of that old man, whose deep breathing alone, was heard in the silence, and the thought of the virtue and constancy which must exist in one who could approach his end so calmly.

At last a longer, deeper respiration gave token of his awaking. When thoroughly awake, he raised his head slowly, and placing his hand upon it, said:

"You have given me great relief, Fra Benedetto, God will reward you for it. Oh! how many things," he said, smiling a little, "how many beautiful things I have seen, while I was sleeping. My God! Thou art too gracious to thy poor servant. Only last night, He deigned to show me His glory. He sent His most holy martyr to visit me. Oh! Fra Benedetto, what joy"

He returned. I saw him before me, and he consoled me! *Quid retribuam Domino?* How can I, in my poverty, worthily thank the Eternal Goodness for such a gift? Now, I feel full of that strength, which God alone can give, of that life, which He alone can impart, and which can never die!"

"Thank Him then, let us thank Him together," said the Frate, filled with the sweetest joy, at seeing the afflicted old man so comforted.

"Yes," answered the latter, "Glory to God in the Highest! Let us prepare ourselves to enter into His glory."

Niccolò, feeling his mind more free, now wished to confess: when he had finished, preparations were made to administer the sacrament for the dying, and Fra Benedetto went to the altar, and had other candles lighted, and put on the sacerdotal vestments.

The Brethren lighted each a torch, and placed themselves in a circle at the foot of the couch, two only of them, (these were Lamberto and Bindo,) approached Niccolò, placed a cushion on the ground where he was to kneel, and stationed themselves on each side of him to support him.

Fra Benedetto drew the pyx from the tabernacle, opened it, took from it a wafer, and, turning around, raised his hands to the height of his breast, pronouncing these cheering and solemn words, "*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.*"

And Niccolò in the meantime, with a celestial light radiating from his eyes, was on his knees, supported by his two sons, and raising his pale trembling hands towards the sacrament.

Whoever remembers the head of St. Jerome painted by Domenichino, in this same attitude, may have a remote idea of the divine and ardent love, which was impressed upon the countenance of Niccolò. When he saw before him Fra Benedetto, in the act of administering to him the consecrated wafer, he said, shedding tears of joy:

"I thank thee, Most High God, that Thou hast come to visit Thy servant, to conduct his immortal soul out of the miseries of this dark vale! Wash me from every spot, and every sin, that I may repent of everything, and implore Thy pardon! Bear witness, you who are around me, that, dying, I pardon the Palleachi, I feel in my heart, that I love them as brothers, and I promise to pray for them in heaven, that we may all be one day, re-united in that heavenly Jerusalem, where all hatred is extinguished, and we shall all live in the sunshine of Eternal Love."

All the bystanders wept: Fra Benedetto wept also, and so much agitated was he by his emotions, that his knees could

scarcely support him, as he placed the sacrament between the pale lips of the old man.

He turned to the altar, he ended the prayers, he laid aside the robes, and repaired to the side of his friend, who, still kneeling, supported by his sons, who were weeping passionately, raised his face, radiant and smiling, to heaven, and pronounced from time to time, short and fervent prayers.

They remained thus an hour. The clock of the Palazzo sounded nine. The officer entered; a rough burly man of stupid aspect, whose duty it was to execute the sentence, came up to Niccolò, and said in the customary phrase:

"Messere, I do my office, I ask your pardon for it."

"And I *thank* you for it, you open for me the gates of paradise." And Niccolò embraced him. Then he said to Fra Benedetto, "Would you be so kind as to cut off these few locks about my neck? It is the last trouble I shall give you."

A pair of scissors were sent for, and the white hair of Niccolò was cut off and gathered up by the Frate, who, at a sign from Niccolò, handed it to him. Niccolò, careful not to be observed, placed it under Bindo's cloak, and in his hand which he pressed, and in this pressure, the poor old man concentrated all the love, which he bore and always had borne, to his last and youngest son.

Another hour passed — ten o'clock struck — ten beadles entered with lighted torches. Fra Benedetto and the sons understood all, and they shuddered. Niccolò alone, remained as at first, tranquil and serene, — being assisted, he rose, and, turning to the Frati who surrounded him, and who had taken the crucifix from the ground, and raised it on high, to bear it before him, he said, smiling, "Adieu! adieu!"

They set forward. Bindo supported him on one side, Lamberto following, and Fra Benedetto at his other side, holding before him, the tablet with the crucifix upon it, suggested prayers and aspirations, sometimes in Latin, and sometimes in Italian.

Niccolò's step was firm and steady, neither slow nor hurried. They had now reached the door at the head of the outer staircase, from whence they could see the court-yard, illuminated by many torches, and filled with beadles and soldiers, armed with halberds, all silent, with their eyes directed towards the condemned. Niccolò descended the stairs in the same composed manner, and when he came into the middle of the yard, where the block was placed, and where the executioner was standing and holding a glittering axe in both hands, he stopped, and said to him, "When I lay my head upon the block, give me a moment, that I may recommend my soul to God."

Then, turning his eyes around upon them all, he said, in a clear voice :

" I pardon my enemies, and pray God to accept this my death, for the salvation of my country."

He knelt, and placed his head upon the block.

Bindo and Lamberto closed their eyes, and, for a moment, there was the deepest silence — then a hollow, resolute stroke — They opened their eyes. The trunk lay on the ground, on one side of the block, the sacred head on the other, the face upturned, pale and smiling.

They had still strength enough to move, they took up the body and extended it upon a bier, they replaced the head, and (so clean was the cut) it looked like a crimson ribbon encircling the neck.

On the sixteenth of August, before day-break, the bell of San Marco sent forth a funeral peal.

Within the church, a bier was placed in its centre, with four iron candlesticks at its corners; Fra Benedetto, dressed in black, was saying mass, with the same forms described in the first chapter of our story.

In the coffin, was the corpse of Niccolò, in the dress of the Dominicans. He looked as if he slept, his face was pale and serene.

Lamberto, Bindo, Fanfulla, Maurice, Bozza, and a crowd of artisans, and people of the lower class, prayed, kneeling around, silent and motionless, save that, now and then, some one wiped his eyes with the back of his hand.

The mass was ended, the obsequies finished. Some men belonging to the convent came, and with iron crow-bars, raised a stone, which covered a vault before the altar of the Madonna. Lamberto, Bindo and the others, took the body, in the sheet on which it lay, and carefully, and without discomposing it, lowered it into the tomb. The stone was then put back into its place. These poor workmen prayed and wept over it, and, then, one after another, went out, leaving none in the church but Bindo, Lamberto, Fanfulla and Maurice.

The two brothers, kneeling upon the stone that covered Niccolò's body, took each other by the hand, and Lamberto said, in a firm, loud voice :

" We swear to God and thee, our father, to exert ourselves constantly, so long as we live, to restore to Florence her liberties, and never lay down our arms, but resist her enemies to the death."

Then, rising, they left the church.

CONCLUSION.

THE capitulative arrangements of the surrender of Florence, guaranteed the lives, liberty and property of all the citizens indiscriminately. These stipulations had been solemnly sworn to, by the Commissary Valori and Don Ferrante Gonzaga. But they had no sooner entered the city, and taken possession of it, than they put some to death, despoiled others of their property, and banished an immense number of citizens, assigning to each his place of exile, and whoever exceeded his limits, was declared a rebel. Such a beginning had the Medicean principality.

The cities of Italy were crowded to overflowing with Florentine exiles, arriving meagre and wasted, from the effects of a long siege and a fatiguing journey, and the spectacle of their calamities, the sight of old men, matrons and children, torn violently and treacherously from their homes, raised a universal cry of indignation against the authors of such villany, and, perhaps, awoke remorse in the hearts of those who had the power, but not the will to prevent it.

Of similar errors, followed by similar remorse. the history of Italy is full.

Many Florentine families, without waiting to be banished by the Balìa, left the city voluntarily, and, repairing to some remote corner of the dominion, sought to remain there, obscure and forgotten, feeling, perhaps, that in this way, they had not wholly lost their country. Some of them retired to Serravezza, where, tradition still points out the houses, formerly occupied by the exiles.

In the centre of the chain of the Apuani mountains, which extend to the right, as you go from Lucca to Sarzana, by the Pietra Santa road, whose bare, steep, inaccessible declivities rise one behind another, with infinite variety of position, form and color; in the centre, I say, of these mountains, opens a narrow, sinuous valley, through which, limpid and fresh, descending from the heights of the Panie, runs the Versilia, under the dense shade of very old chestnut trees. The entrance to this valley, masked by the interlocking of two lofty mountain peaks,

is completely concealed from the most searching eye, as if nature, with a kindly foresight, had wished to prepare a place of refuge for the weak against the strong.

Ascending the Versilia, about a mile up the mountain, we find Serravezza, where the valley is enlarged a little by the confluence of another torrent, coming from Monte Altissimo. Here, in the latter part of September, Lamberto repaired with his betrothed and her brother, taking with him also Selvaggia, Fanfulla, Maurice and the little Ariguccio.

The time which had passed from the death of Niccolò, until this period, they had spent at Monte Murlo, where Laudomia, as we have seen, was left very ill, and where, through the tidings of her father's end, which it was impossible to keep from her, her malady was so much increased, as to endanger her life, and, after several weeks, she could, with difficulty, raise her head from the pillow.

She had a long and painful convalescence, greatly retarded by the distressing and continual thought of her father, her brothers and her country, and the sight of Liza, who had been brought hither from Florence.

She (Liza) still remained in that state, which divides those who love, by an abyss, a hundred times more painful and tremendous than death, for it is less hard to mourn the departure of a spirit, with whom one has long reciprocated thoughts and feelings, than to see it thus disordered and ruined.

The madness of Liza was not violent, or even, at least, to appearance, constant. She passed hours, and sometimes whole days, in a profound and motionless silence, her eyes staring and fixed upon the ground, with a look that was most intense, and, so to say, petrified, and sometimes she said, in a low voice, "He *was* a traitor!" At times, she even seemed to recognize people, and understand what they said to her, but these were brief flashes of light, in an immensity of darkness.

Since, however, there was nothing in her habits to excite fear, she was left at liberty, guarded only by a peasant girl, whose business it was, to keep an eye upon her, when she could be induced to go out, the physician, who had been consulted upon her case, having advised that she should be kept as much as possible in the open air, and in pleasant and agreeable places.

One day, with that subtle cunning, which, with the insane, always survives the intellect, she contrived, when out of doors with her guide, to send her away for a few moments. When the girl returned to the place where she left Liza, she was gone, and though she ran about everywhere in search of her, she

could neither find her, nor get the least trace of her, and was obliged to go back weeping, to the house, to announce the fact to the family, who, greatly terrified, went out, every one, excepting Laudomia, in search of the poor fugitive, and running through all the suburbs, and the woods at the foot of the castle, and calling her by name from time to time, they searched again and again, every bush, hedge and thicket.

It was all in vain, and when night set in, they returned, afflicted and disconsolate, to the rectory, nor could they, though they continued their search and inquiries for many subsequent days, discover what had become of her.

But a letter written about this time by Vanni, the custodian of the villa of the Barone, to Baccio Valori, may perhaps give the reader some news of her, and therefore we insert it entire.

“MAGNIFICO MESSER BACCIO :—

“*My Most Honored Lord*,—Since the last letter that I sent you by Cecco, the courier, in which, as was my duty, I notified you of the case of that gentleman you sent here, who disappeared without either my (or any one else in this vicinity) ever being able to get any tidings of him, and though I have not failed to use all diligence in executing your commands, I have never been able to learn anything of Messer Troilo, for no one has seen him hereabouts, a thing which seems impossible, for unless he went away through the air, I should suppose some one must have seen him.

“Entering the villa yesterday, which I had not been into, since the day those people came, and busying myself in opening the windows to admit the air, in order that the property of Your Magnificence may be kept in good order, as is my duty, I went to the yellow chamber, and opening the door, I thought I had entered a sepulchre, such was the deadly stench within, that, to avoid being sickened by it, I had to open the doors and windows, as wide as I could.

“And searching diligently to ascertain whence the said stench proceeded, I found that it came from the mouth of the opening in the wall, beside the bed, well known to your Magnificence. I ran for a rope, and tying a light to it, I let it down, but could not discover anything, the hole was so deep, and the light being extinguished, before it had descended twenty feet. If the place could be got at, I would try to discover what has been thrown down there, but to do that, the walls and vaults must be torn down, for I know of no other way, and therefore I await the commands of your Magnificence.

“While I was puzzling my brain with this business, for I was alone in the villa, I heard steps behind me, and turning round, I saw a young woman, who hurriedly entered the room, in great disorder, and from her looks, I readily perceived that she was insane; she was very pretty, and had the air of a gentlewoman; she assailed me with a heap of nonsense, such as mad people generally use, and wanted me to show her ‘where that traitor was;’ then she would threaten me a little, then weep a little, and then entreat my compassion, so that I had the greatest difficulty to get rid of her importunity. Who she

was, or who *this traitor* was, I cannot say, for after a short tarry, she went away as she came, wherever her madness carried her, and the shepherds say, they saw her yesterday evening towards dark, climbing the mountain, and that, when they attempted to stop her, she defended herself with her nails, and so they suffered her to go, and she immediately set off, running through the woods.

"I hope no harm will happen her, but there are several wolves prowling about among the hills.

"I have no other news at present, but I humbly commend myself to your Magnificence.

"From the Barone — day of Aug. 1530.

"Your servant,

VANNI."

Baccio Valori, who had his own secret suspicions, as to the unlucky end of Troilo, as well as to who were the authors of it, without experiencing, as may be believed, any very great sorrow thereupon, thought it not well to make any farther researches, satisfied with having one creditor the less, without seeking to know the *how* or the *whence* he derived this advantage. He wrote to Vanni, to throw into the aperture, a quantity of quick-lime, to leave the windows open until the stench had subsided, and to trouble himself no farther about the matter. Such were the honorable obsequies of Troilo, and here ends his history.

That of poor Liza also ends here, for neither her family, notwithstanding their long and persevering search, nor any person in that part of the country, ever learned how or where she ended her days.

Did she die of hunger in some unknown solitude? Was she devoured by the wolves mentioned by Vanni? That will be known on the day of judgment. But if all certainty upon these facts is wanting, there is no lack of conjecture, and with the patient and courteous reader, whom, having followed us along as far as here, we may consider a friend of long standing, we will have no secrets or reserve. In 1580, that is to say, fifty years after the siege, some hunters in pursuit of game in the mountains over against San Marcello, arrived at a wild, stony, desolate spot, concealed between arid cliffs, where numerous caverns penetrated the sides of the mountains, extending no one knew where. In this solitude, called at our day Macerato, probably from the rubbish, *macerie*, in which it abounds, these men found an old woman, dressed in very coarse clothing, which was not however, squalid and neglected, like those who are professional mendicants. Her hair unbound, and reaching to her knees, fell from her head and spread itself around her whole figure, like a silvery veil. Her face was pale and emaciated, her look downcast and sad. She was on her knees, at the entrance of one of these caves, before a cross

roughly made of two branches of chestnut, tied together with a twig of osier. She neither moved nor turned, at the arrival of the hunters, who, reverent and astonished, stopped to observe her, and heard her from time to time, say with a sigh, "My God! My God! So many years as I have wept for him! Canst Thou have pardoned him?"

Then, remaining silent a few moments, she repeated her prayer, and always in the same words. The men went away, and made inquiries of the peasants with regard to her, and learned that she was considered a saint by many, but no one knew who she was, or where she came from. They said that, after trying in vain to persuade her to live in a house, they had accommodated her with a little bed in this cave, and that one or another of them brought to her her daily food. At last, one day they found her stretched upon her bed, cold and white as marble, and finding she was indeed dead, they buried her in the consecrated ground of San Marcello. Either, from the example of this person, or from some other reason, that cave from that time to this, has always had some occupant, and at this day, there are two poor old women who lead there a wild, solitary life.

Whether this person was our poor Liza, we cannot say. Assuming, however, that it was really she, what must have been the love of this unhappy one, if, after such suffering, such betrayal, after having lost everything, even her senses, love for that traitor alone remained intact in her heart, and so powerful, that even to her latest days, her latest breath, unable to do anything else, she had wept, had prayed for him!

In the early part of October, Lamberto, who might now be said to be the head and leader of his company, was forced to think of removing from Monte Murlo, where, from its vicinity to Florence, and, from the suspicions of the new government, they lived in continual peril. He proceeded with them to Serravezza, not without the greatest inconvenience to poor Laudomia, whose vacillating health had become still more impaired by Liza's afflicting disappearance. It is the sublime gift of truly noble and virtuous souls, to remain tranquil and serene amidst the most terrible trials; to this peace of mind, which envious impotence miscalls apathy, we are to attribute the fact, that Laudomia survived hers, and was gradually enabled to recover strength, and be born again, so to say, into a new existence.

In the house of which they took possession, one of the first on the Ripa side, they were all very well accommodated, re-

eruiting themselves after so many trials, with the quiet of that familiar domestic life, separated from the rest of the world, which does the afflicted so much good, but which so few are permitted to enjoy. But the sweetness of this mode of life did not cause Bindo and Lamberto to forget the august thought of their country, the last words of Niccolò, nor the oath pronounced by them upon his tomb. They had no sooner made a permanent settlement of their affairs, than they began to consider in what way they should best carry into effect the grand design of restoring liberty to Florence. At the first stunning shock of such utter ruin, the outlawed Piagnoni, scattered through the Italian cities, with difficulty recovered the faculty of hope, and the disposition to form plans for the future ; as, at the explosion of a mine, it is some moments, before men can look each other in the face. Soon, however, they began to meet and talk together, correspond by letter, and arrange that net of feeble, disconnected piecemeal plans, which, instead of breaking the chains of Florence, only riveted them.

The two brothers resolved to follow and participate in any new enterprise which should be decided upon. Lamberto was to remain at home, while Bindo went to visit the cities of Italy, where there was the greatest number of exiles, and if a propitious occasion should present itself, he was to inform his brother, who would not delay to rush where even holier duties than those of family, called him. Bindo departed, and Fanfulla accompanied him ; for, having once made trial of monastic life, he had no wish to return to it.

Since we are to speak of these two actors in our tale, we will tell briefly, and without regard to anticipating events, what we know of their doings, so that we need not afterwards break the thread of what little remains to be told.

In all the plots, devices and conspiracies with which the outlawed Florentines strove to change the government of Florence, even to the taking of Siena, in 1555, with which, was extinguished forever, all hope of withdrawing it from the Medicæan yoke, Bindo labored with that forgetfulness of self and self-interest, that boldness and fiery zeal, which rendered him the true and living portrait of Niccolò, his father. In 1535, he was at Naples, with the principal men of his party, who had repaired thither, to demand of Charles V. the observance of the capitulations of the surrender of Florence.

The Emperor listened to the arguments set forth by Jacopo Narli, in a long oration. He listened to the answer of the Duke Alessandro. He said some conciliating words to the exiles, and addressed some arguments to the Duke, stipulating,

however, some conditions, under which, the exiles might be allowed to return to their country.

So long as the world endures, the proud and generous answer of the exiles, will serve as an example to those who may find themselves in the same or similar circumstances.

"We did not come here," they answered, "to ask of His Imperial Majesty, under what conditions we were to serve the Duke Alessandro, nor to implore, through imperial intercession, pardon of him for what we have justly and voluntarily done in behalf of the liberty of our country, nor to return slaves to that city, from whence we came out free but a short time since, in order that our property may be restored to us, but we come to His Majesty, confiding in the justice of his soul, that it may please him to restore that true and entire liberty, which, by his agents and ministers, in 1530, was promised, in his name, should be preserved to us. Now, seeing that more respect is had to the satisfaction of the Duke Alessandro, than to the just merits of our honest cause, that no mention is made of liberty, little of the public good, and that even the restoration of the exiles is not free, but conditional and limited, — no otherwise than if it were demanded as a favor, we can make no other reply, than that we are all resolved to live free, and die free, as we were born, and that we will never, for our private convenience, tarnish the sincerity and purity of our souls, by failing of that charity and piety, which is justly required of all good citizens towards their country."

Varchi, from whom we have abridged this reply, adds :

"It was a thing highly worthy of note, that not one of them would accept the privilege, which the Emperor, by his decision, granted them, of returning to their country, and recovering their real estate, and enjoying those honors and dignities which were enjoyed by the other citizens, although the greater part of those exiles were exceedingly poor and destitute."

Baffled in the way of treaty, they resorted to force of arms, and (the Duke Alessandro having been murdered by Lorenzino) then attacked Cosimo, his successor, led on by Piero Strozzi, a leader equally brave and unfortunate, who was defeated at Monte Murlo (where Baccio Valori and Filippo Strozzi were taken prisoners), and finally suffered a total rout from the Marquis of Marignano, at the battle of Marciano and of Scannagallo, in that of Siena.

Bindo and Fanfulla, the latter an old man of sixty, and the other a man of forty ; who had so long shared together their good and evil fortune, their hopes, fears and perils ; loving each other as only men love, who have long fought side by side, both

died; the first, in the battle, the other on the night previous. Of Lamberto, who fought with them, we shall speak afterwards, narrating his affairs the last.

The moment, then, has arrived when we must separate, and forever, from our good Fanfulla. To the reader who has not known and loved him so long as we have, who cannot imagine, from what we have said of him, what goodness, what fidelity, what greatness of soul there was under that rough and singular rind of his, this separation may seem no great thing. If so, I grieve for thee, my poor Fanfulla, that thou wert not known to those who could do thee justice, and make known to the world thy virtue, and that I, who knew thee, had not the ability to write of thee as thou deservest! And, what is worse, this, my grief, will unfit me more than ever, to find suitable words and style to relate thy end. However, it will not do to keep it from the reader. To get out of the difficulty, we will transcribe a letter written to Lamberto by his servant, Maurice, from the solitudes of Vernia; whither he had retired to mourn the death of Fanfulla, of which he was, alas! the involuntary, but not wholly innocent cause.

“ Vernia, Oct. 3, 1555.

“ MY LORD AND MASTER,

“ Poor Maurice comes now with his knees upon the ground and his arms crossed, and demands pardon and mercy from his master, which he does not deserve; but poor Maurice feels such great grief that he can neither sleep nor eat, and, willing to do penance forever more, he has sworn never more to drink wine, and he prays God that he may die soon; but he cannot die, if his master does not say, ‘Poor Maurice, I have pardoned you.’

“ I will now tell you all, everything, the very truth, just how this bad business happened, so that God and Messer Lamberto may pardon poor Maurice, and see that he did not do it with a bad intention.

“ Your Illustrious Highness, my good master, then must know, that the night before the battle of Marciano, I was on guard with poor old Fanfulla a long way from the soldiers’ quarters, and I said to Fanfulla, ‘Fanfulla, I have long had a desire to confess my sins, because I have dreamed that I should die in to-morrow’s battle,’ and Fanfulla answered: ‘I have the same desire, but there is neither monk nor priest here.’ Then I thought of a remedy, and I said: ‘I will confess to you, and you shall confess to me, and God will be satisfied with our good intentions;’ * and so we did. First, I confessed to poor Fanfulla all my sins, which were very great, and

* The soldiers of these times had many superstitious of this sort. For example, these too zealous comrades used to fill the mouth of a soldier fatally wounded, with earth, as a substitute for the communion

Fanfulle gave me for penance, hard blows upon my shoulders, with the handle of his halberd. Oh! they were hard, very hard; but he said, 'Patience, you deserve still harder blows.' After that, good Fanfulle confessed to me, all his sins from a very little boy, which lasted more than two hours, and had not finished then; but all at once, I thought that Fanfulle had served poor Maurice an ugly trick, by giving him for penance, such a pounding with the handle of his halberd, and then I had the greatest longing to give him penance of the same sort; and Fanfulle had patience for a little while, then he lost it, and gave poor Maurice tremendous blows, and then both lost their temper, and grew very angry, and poor Maurice had the great misfortune, not being able to see, for the darkness, to strike good Fanfulle on the head, so that he fell to the ground, saying, 'Good Maurice, I thank you, you have sent me to paradise.' And good Fanfulle could say nothing more, for he was dead, and I weep and weep, and shall weep forever, if my master does not pardon me," &c.

The body of Bindo, who, as we mentioned, was killed in battle, was honorably interred. In disrobing him, a long lock of white hair was found in his breast,—it was that of his father; for he had always worn there, that memento of the oath sworn upon his tomb. Dyed in his own blood, it attested the fidelity with which he had kept that oath. The peasants who buried the corpse, respected this memorial, and placed it in his bosom before they covered his grave.

To narrate these last events, we must overleap the space of about twenty-five years. But, in order to acquaint our readers with the after circumstances of Lamberto and the two young women, we must return to the time when Bindo left Serravezza.

After the long series of agitations, sufferings and misfortunes, by which Selvaggia, Laudomia, and her betrothed, had been afflicted, it seemed at last, that fortune was willing to grant them a little repose. Their present state, the quiet of the spot where they had fixed the place of their abode, everything seemed to promise peace and tranquillity. But the promise was fallacious, happiness was still far from their troubled souls.

The reader, who we fear will think that our story has already been long enough, will be glad to learn, that we do not intend to prolong it still further, by describing too minutely the sufferings of these three. Besides, he can imagine them from what has preceded, and therefore a few words here will be sufficient.

The conduct of Selvaggia, her kindness and generosity had been such, that no one, particularly Laudomia and Lamberto, would ever have thought of sending her away, or of denying her the sole guerdon which had been, for the unhappy girl, the aim and end of such long and painful sufferings, the blessing of finding at last some one to love her.

This blessing she now, for the first time, enjoyed, and to that degree, which is the compensation of ardent souls, for that excess of suffering to which they are condemned by Providence.

In the intoxication of a state so new, it seemed to her she had obtained everything she could desire; she thought that the felicity of her life might consist in seeing Lamberto, and in enjoying the friendship and gratitude of the two betrothed. All this was paradise, in comparison to the degrading misery of her past life. She proposed to remain with them always. Lamberto and Laudomia approved the plan, and promised to regard her as a sister, and all three supposed they had formed an admirable connection, which must be for the advantage of all.

To how many mistakes, is the kind heart, which is indeed a thing so beautiful, liable, when reason and experience do not serve as guides. With any reader who may have reached the age of twenty-five, this truth requires no comment.

Things went on well for some time. But, after the departure of Bindo, the three being necessarily reduced to a more close and intimate intercourse, they began to experience, by little and little, in their reciprocal relations, a sense of restraint, wholly new, rather felt, than acknowledged, or to be explained by any reasoning, but which will be readily understood and explained by our reader.

Selvaggia still loved Lamberto, and the privilege of seeing him at all times, by which she had felt at first amply paid, at length became almost a torment, from the necessity of progress there is in love.

The candid heart of Laudomia, was incapable of that jealousy which is nourished by suspicion and distrust, and which equally degrades the one who cherishes it, and the one who gives occasion or pretext for it. But she could not delude herself with regard to the beauty of Selvaggia, or the feelings that must be produced by her misfortunes, and the generosity of her continued sacrifices, and the betrothed of Lamberto lived on, with a heart filled with a timid, indefinable and painful anxiety.

Too discerning, not to divine the torments which Selvaggia must suffer in the secret depths of her heart, and too affectionate, not to seek every possible means to render them less bitter, she found, when they were all three together, that she was at a loss to know how to conduct herself towards Lamberto, always fearing that their mutual love should manifest itself too openly; it sometimes even seemed to her, that Selvaggia

must hate her, that she did hate her; at other times, the thought flashed through her mind that Lamberto might change, might grow cool towards her; and if she were wrong in this, her doubts will not appear wholly unreasonable, to those who remain wholly in appearances.

In the heart of the young man, there was not an affection, not a thought, that was not Laudomia's, but, precisely because he loved her so much, he passed the most severe and even unjust judgment upon himself; it seemed to him that he could not feel affection or gratitude for Selvaggia, without profaning that love which he had wholly given to the daughter of Niccolò. And when alone with these two, he was in continual fear, lest a look, a motion or a word, addressed to Selvaggia, might in some way offend his betrothed, whence there was a degree of embarrassment in his conversation and manner, which might easily lead to misunderstandings, from being attributed to very different causes.

The reader may imagine, whether the intercourse between three persons, under such circumstances, could have that intimacy and freedom, which is its highest, indispensable requisite.

They had, however, one theme of discourse, on which, as on neutral ground, their minds could meet, without the accompaniment of secret and disturbing thoughts, and this theme was religion.

Lamberto and Laudomia, by that tendency inseparable from all who are in a sincere and profound persuasion of the truths of Christianity, used every effort to induce Selvaggia to become a Christian, nor did it cost the latter a great exertion to form such a determination. Was it persuasion? Was it the desire of following the same faith that Lamberto professed? God knows what it was. The fact was that Selvaggia was baptized, accepted in heart the new faith, and followed the practices, precepts and ideas of the new worship, with the ardor and impetuosity natural to her character. But, if she had changed her worship, she had not been able, by the same means, to change her heart.

The illness of Laudomia, and the misfortunes and agitations which had caused it, had, till now, been obstacles to the ardent wish of Lamberto, to call himself the husband of her on whose hand, in the church of San Marco, he had placed the ring of betrothal. But now, all impediment seemed removed, and the young man began to press Laudomia with earnest entreaties, to name the day of their union. The daughter of Niccolò appeared as if she could not think of such a thing, and on hearing

the passionate solicitations of her lover, seemed thoughtful, hesitating, and sometimes she could hardly restrain her tears. Lamberto knew not what to think of a manner so unusual to her, and one day, throwing himself at her feet, he conjured her to relieve him from such torturing suspense, and open her heart to him, as she ought, to one who loved her above all others.

They were in the house, and it was just dusk. Laudomia, without replying, rose, and, giving her hand to the young man, she led him out of doors. They silently took the path which leads to Ripa, along the shady banks of the Versilia. They arrived where the stream, dividing into two branches, encircles a small island covered with willows, poplars, and hazel bushes. They crossed the stream on the stepping-stones placed in a row across it, and, reaching a narrow path, where, under a vault of green over-arching boughs, some rough seats were placed, Laudomia said :

"I have brought you here to this remote spot, because the words that I have to say to you, are of serious import. I wished to be certain of not being heard or interrupted by any one ; promise, that you yourself will not interrupt me."

Lamberto, astonished and almost terrified, promised it, and Laudomia continued :

"The love which I bear you, Lamberto, was blessed by Niccolò, our father. I need not then blush to acknowledge it, it is great, and precisely because it is so, it is more thoughtful of your good than my own. Lamberto, I know it, I am not the only one who loves you. The flower of my beauty, if, indeed, I ever had any, has been withered by misfortune. I, poor girl, have never had occasion to encounter perils, hardships and fatigues, or to shed my blood for love of you. Oh! would that I had! I have never had an opportunity to show myself as great, as generous as she." It is useless to say that Lamberto, greatly excited, tried from time to time to interrupt Laudomia, but with a look and a sign, she reminded him of his promise. "All this I know; but Lamberto, remember, I told you, the first time you ever spoke of love to me, that I could renounce you, but I could not share the least part of your affection with another woman! She, I know, may have once been unworthy of a single thought of yours, but repentance has virtue to renew the soul, and restore it to its first nobility. Does not God open heaven to the repentant? I cannot see her so miserable on my account; if then, now, or in time to come, you also should become — it would be too much despair for poor *Laudomia* — let me seek repose in God, and in the thought of knowing you are happy."

Lamberto had succeeded, until then, in conquering the impulse he felt, to throw himself at the feet of his betrothed; restrained more than anything else, by the sweetness of contemplating thus unveiled, this soul of paradise, but, at this point, he could control himself no longer, and falling prostrate, with his forehead upon the hem of her garment, which he kissed a thousand times, he found words worthy of her who heard them, worthy of his love; words which dispersed every doubt, conquered every fear, and restored to the heart of Laudomia, a tranquil and serene confidence, which diffused itself over her countenance, as placing her white hand on Lamberto's forehead, she said :

"Now, then, forever yours!"

Returning home, for it was now quite dark, they could not find Selvaggia. Late in the evening, a peasant girl appeared, bringing a letter; they opened it, and read these words.

"My last hope of obtaining peace, is in that God, whom you have made known to me. I go to pray to Him, upon His sepulchre, in that land, where it was His will to die for our salvation. I shall always bear you in my heart, you, who alone, of all the world, have loved me; you gave me what it was in your power to give me, but my heart demanded more. I bless you, pray for God's peace for me, and an end to my sufferings, for I will ask for you, life and happiness.

SELVAGGIA."

Two years after this, Laudomia and Lamberto were, one evening, in their little parlor; he was reading a letter from Bindo, she had, at her feet, a cradle, in which a baby of five months was sleeping, to whom they had given the name of Niccolò, when a man appeared, who told them, that a woman had landed on the coast during the day, who appeared to be dangerously ill, that she was desirous of going immediately to Serravezza, but her strength failing her, and she being still desirous of reaching there, in some way or other, he had been constrained to carry her upon a bed, hastily made of branches of trees, with a sack of straw placed upon it.

When they reached the Madonna di Quercia, she felt herself near her end, and she made him carry her to the door of the church, under some cypress trees, and sent him to Laudomia and Lamberto, to beg them to come to her immediately :

Both exclaimed at once, "It is Selvaggia!"

And anxious to know if it were indeed she, they mounted their horses, and descended quickly to the place indicated.

The night was serene, the moon resplendent, throwing upon the white front of the little church, the opaque shadows of the

cypresses. They saw, at a distance, the bed, the woman lying upon it, a priest at her side, and at her feet, a peasant girl, with a lighted candle: they pushed on their horses, and, a moment afterwards, both were pressing, between their hands, those of poor Selvaggia, whom they could hardly recognize, so changed was she, and reduced to a mere shadow.

She gazed upon Laudomia and Lamberto, and in that long, last look, her noble and generous soul seemed to mingle with theirs. She was silent a moment, as if striving to collect what little strength she had left; then she said, with broken words, interrupted, from time to time, by the agonies of death:

"I have never found peace—never! I felt, instead, death creeping into my heart—I feared I could not reach—I have arrived, God be thanked—bless you both, who alone loved me—the poor courtesan—Lamberto, place your hand on my forehead—it was my last wish—call me yours. Pardon me, Laudomia, but I love him now, as they love in heaven."

As Lamberto placed his hand upon the woman's forehead, he felt it grow cold as ice, a smile passed over her lips, and then death fixed itself there. Lamberto and his wife wept long over the cold, inanimate body of her, to whom much should be forgiven, because she loved much. They buried her, with honor, in the consecrated ground of the little church.

For a long series of years, the lives of our married pair, were agitated by serious and constantly recurring trials. Jealous custodian of the promise given to Niccolò, Lamberto followed, together with Bindo and Fanfulla, so long as they lived, the fortunes of the exiles. He followed these fortunes equally after their death, and, as long as there was one sword drawn in Italy, in opposition of the Medici, it had for its companion, that of Lamberto.

At last, every hope extinguished, and wearied of useless resistance, he repaired with his wife to Genoa, where they lived as happily as those can live, who have lost their country, and see it impoverished and degraded.

Here ends our story, in which, narrating the misfortunes of a single family, we have endeavored to depict that of many others, and, indeed, of a whole country.

But what end was ordained to those, who, in ways more or less culpable and direct, were the authors of the ruin of their country, and obtained this, at least, at the price of so many tears and so much bloodshed? We shall see.

Clement VII. wishing to establish the dominion of the illegitimate branch of the Medici family, to the exclusion of the legitimate branch who hated the other, and from whom de-

scended Giovanni, of the Bande Nere, opened instead, the way to the principality, for the son of this latter, which remained in that succession until almost the middle of the last century.

Charles V. who, hoping to transmit the Imperial Crown to his son Philip, had lavished blood and treasures, to strengthen his power in Italy, thinking thus to bind together the two parts of so vast a monarchy, deluded in his hopes, left to his son the dukedom of Milan, and the kingdom of Naples, dominions, distant and dangerous, which cost Spain more than they ever produced, and contributed, at last, to exhaust it in the long war of the succession.

Whether the Florentines, who defended their country with so much constancy, and for such a length of time, against the usurpations of the Medici, succeeded, at last, in extricating themselves or not, we have already seen. Did they deserve their fate? Shall we have the courage to say it? Yes, in part, at least, they did deserve it. They desired liberty for themselves, and, at the same time, oppressed the cities of their dominion; they incited the Cancellieri and Panciatichi of Pistoja to deadly combat; they filled up the ditches of the pestiferous Pisan grounds, in order, that by the miasma of the marshes, the people might be decimated, for when too numerous, they became rebellious: they understood their own rights, and not those of others, they used two weights, and two measures. When danger came, the cities of the dominion co-operated feebly and reluctantly in the defence of Florence; her fall, it seemed to them, would be their liberation, the government of the Medici, an equal exchange for that of their ancient and severe mistress.

The Palleschi and the Ottimati, who, by their treachery in the last days of the siege, believed they had procured the triumph of the oligarchy, perceived, too late, that they had secured the rule of one alone, who took from them all authority, and kept them always inert and degraded.

Baccio Valori, obtained the worthy reward of traitors, contempt from those for whose benefit he had turned traitor, infamy from the universal world, and, at last, was beheaded by order of Duke Cosimò.

Malatesta also, the promulgated traitor of all Italy, retired into Perugia, where he did not retain that authority and those privileges, which Clement VII. had guaranteed to him. Molested also by the Cardinal Ippolito, legate of the city, (whom the Pope would not or could not keep in check,) and who openly favored the party of Braccio, the enemy of Malatesta, he retired to one of his villas, as Varchi says, to while away the grief which

time had caused, and here, fourteen months after the surrender of Florence, foully diseased in mind and body, he departed this life.

Behold the manner in which the authors of so many woes arrive at their predestined end!

Were we not right, then, in admonishing the reader, by the epigraph on the title-page,* that he should see with how little wisdom the world is governed.

* Oxenstiern is popularly held to be right, when he said, "See, my son, how little wisdom it requires to govern states, that is, *men*."

BELWER, in "*My Novel*."

END.

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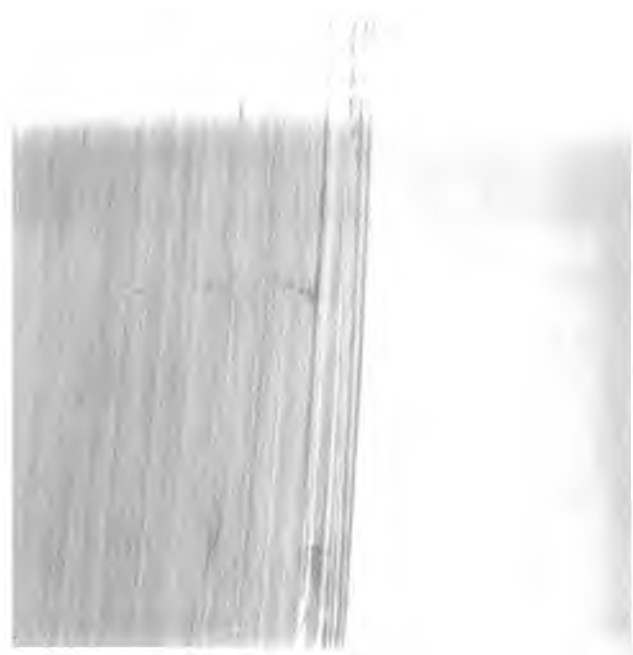
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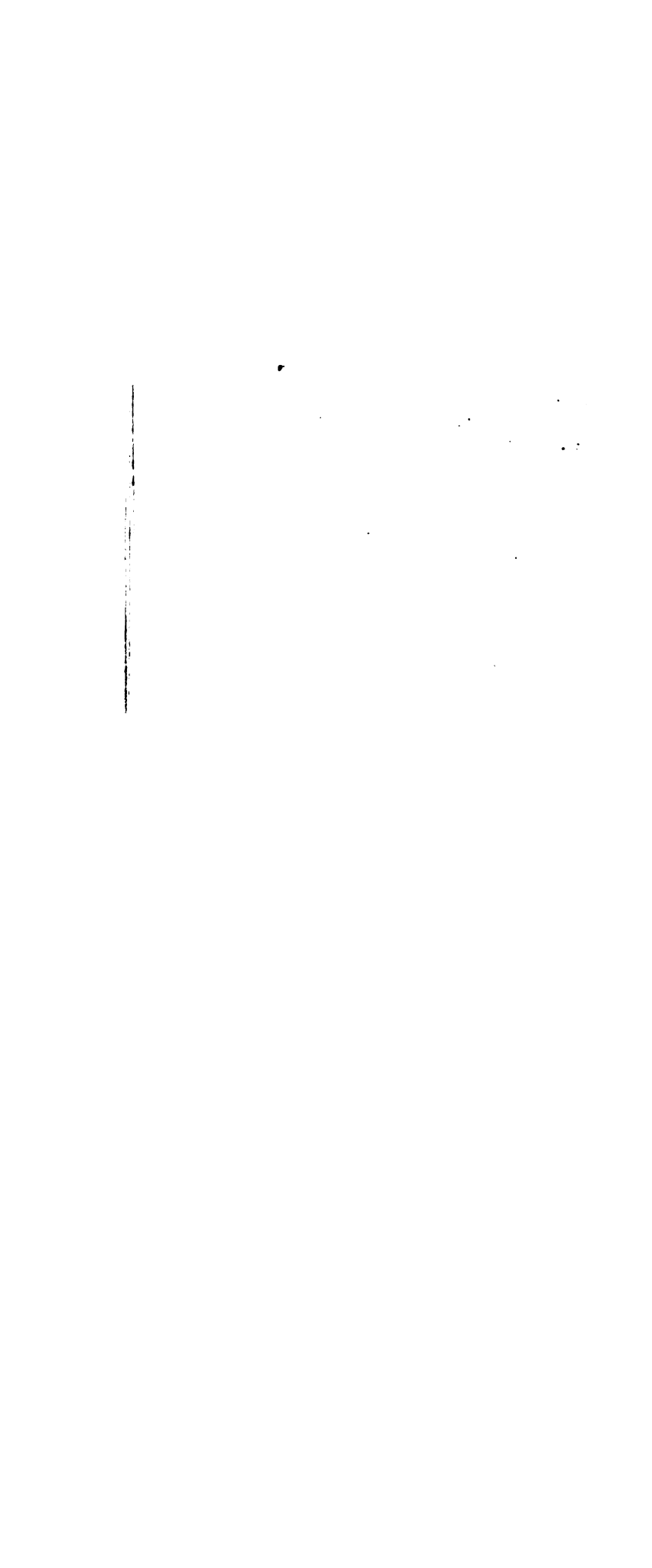
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